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ABSTRACT

This resource manual provides guidelines for development, management, and evaluation of Florida school district programs for students with visual impairments. In each section rules are presented first and are in script type. General rules are followed by rules specific to programs for the visually impaired. Following the rules, recommended best practices and procedures are discussed. Section 1 covers student eligibility procedures including: definitions, eligibility criteria, screening, referral, student evaluation, determining eligibility, the Individualized Education Plan, placement, re-evaluation, and dismissal. Section 2 presents required and recommended instructional procedures including: program objectives, program organization, instructional programs and curriculum, prekindergarten services, evaluation of student performance, and program evaluation. Section 3 covers personnel and facilities, certification requirements, teacher responsibilities, inservice education, facility guidelines, and specialized equipment and materials. Extensive appendices include information on vision screening training and procedures, assessments developed or adapted for the visually impaired, determination of mode of reading for learners with visual impairments, testing modifications, functional vision observation, low vision evaluations, special Florida schools and programs, and the text of the Florida legislation on programs for visually impaired students. Includes 10 references. (DB)

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A RESOURCE MANUAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

Volume II-A: Visually Impaired

State of Florida
Department of Education
Tallahassee, Florida
Betty Castor, Commissioner
Affirmative action/equal opportunity employer

1991

EC 300856

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This resource manual is one of a series of publications available through the Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students, Florida Department of Education, designed to assist school districts, state agencies which operate or support educational programs, and parents in the provision of special programs for exceptional students. For additional information on this manual, or for a list of available publications, contact the Clearinghouse/Information Center, Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students, Division of Public Schools, Florida Department of Education, Florida Education Center, Suite 614, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400 (telephone: 904/488-1879; Suncom: 278-1879; FAX: 487-2194; SpecialNet: BEESPS).

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FOREWORD

Through the provision of State funds by legislative action, the people of Florida have indicated their desire to meet the education needs of exceptional students. The Florida Department of Education is ready to cooperate with parents, teachers, school administrators, other agencies, and interested citizens in an effort to maintain instructional programs for exceptional students.

The right of an exceptional student to a free public education must be fully implemented. This resource manual should assist local school systems in developing appropriate procedures to provide those special arrangements which will enable the student with a visual impairment to make greater progress in acquiring knowledge and skills.

It is hoped that this resource manual will help bring clarity and direction to educational planning for exceptional students in Florida and be broad enough in scope to meet the varying needs of the individual and the school district.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This document was completed by Carol B. Allman, Program Specialist for Visually Impaired, Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students, Department of Education, Tallahassee, Florida.

Editing and review were provided by the following members of the 1987-88 State Steering Committee for Programs for the Visually Impaired.

Sharon Broderick	Duval County School District
Charles Crozier	Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind
Suzanne Dalton	Florida Instructional Materials Center Tampa, Florida
Steve Dunaway	Developmental Services Program Office Dept. of Health & Rehab. Services
Maureen Floegel	Orange County School District
Maureen Gorman	Hillsborough County School District
Diane Johnson	FDLRS/Miccosukee Tallahassee, Florida
Gideon Jones	Florida State University Tallahassee, Florida
Karen Kane	Martin County School District
Jacque Leonard	Okeechobee County School District
Linda Machado	Miami, Florida
Fred Miller	Volusia County School District
Charles Pappas, O.D.	Bascom Palmer Eye Institute Miami, Florida
Marjorie Roberts	Manatee County School District
Priscilla Rogers	Division of Blind Services Tallahassee, Florida

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INTRODUCTION

Until the 1900s, educational programs serving children with visual impairments were provided in residential schools only. These schools were organized on the belief that bringing these children together in one school would help promote a more educational program overall. Since the early 1900s, public school programs for students with visual impairments have increased dramatically due, in part, to the realization that some of these students needed to be integrated with non-handicapped students. The desires of families to keep their children with visual disabilities at home also led to the growth of the public school programs (Scholl, 1986).

At present, the majority of Florida's students with visual impairments school population attend schools in their own districts. Approximately 5% of Florida's students with visual impairments attend the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB). Currently, the cooperation between the FSDB and the public school systems provides the State of Florida with a comprehensive model for educating students with visual impairments.

Programs for students with visual impairments include goals related to both academic and social skills. Variations among students (amount of usable vision, grade levels, additional impairments) as well as philosophies and delivery systems influence programs for individual students with visual impairments. Because of these and other variables, personnel involved with the education of students with visual impairments must have an understanding of state requirements, curriculum needs, facility and personnel provisions, and resources available to serve this population.

State and Federal laws mandate that an appropriate educational program be provided for all students with visual impairments. Nationally, efforts to provide due process rights related to education and treatment have been promoted through litigation and legislation. This resource manual is offered to assist districts in providing appropriate and exemplary instructional programs for a diverse group of students with visual impairments.

The purposes of this resource manual are to

- provide information regarding general considerations for development and evaluation of district programs for students with visual impairments
- provide information specific to program development and evaluation for students with visual impairments
- serve as a vehicle for planning and communication among the exceptional education staff, school principals, parents, and other education and community programs within a district.

The intent of Volume II-A is to provide personnel in Florida's school districts with recommendations and suggestions for the development, management, and evaluation of programs for students with visual impairments. This volume is organized in a format similar to the Special Programs and Procedures for Exceptional Students (Rule 6A-6.03411, FAC) outline. The Florida State Board of Education Rules are stated at the beginning of most of the sections and are in script type to allow the reader to easily distinguish them. General rules are followed by rules specific to programs for students with visual impairments. Following the rules, in regular type, are recommended best practices and procedures for implementation of the rules and for the development of district procedures. The Florida Administrative Code will be referred to as FAC.

SECTION ONE: STUDENT ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES

I. Definitions
II. Criteria for Eligibility
III. Screening Procedures
IV. Referral Procedures
V. Student Evaluation Procedures
VI. Determining Eligibility
VII. Providing an Individual Educational Plan
VIII. Placement
IX. Re-evaluation Procedures
X. Dismissal Procedures

SECTION ONE: STUDENT ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES

I. DEFINITIONS

Rule 6A-6.03014, FAC: *Special Programs for Students Who Are Visually Impaired.*

(1) *Visually impaired. Visual impairments are defined as disorders in the structure and function of the eye that, even with the best correction and treatment, interfere with learning.*

(a) *The blind student is one who after the best possible ocular correction has no vision or has little potential for using vision and relies on tactual or auditory senses for learning.*

(b) *The partially sighted student is one who after the best possible adjustments and ocular corrections uses remaining vision for learning.*

II. CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY

Rule 6A-6.03014(2), FAC: *Criteria for eligibility: A student is eligible for a special program for the visually impaired if the following medical and educational criteria are met:*

(a) *Medical. There is a documented eye impairment as manifested by at least one of the following:*

1. *A visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye after best possible correction;*
2. *A peripheral field so constricted that it affects the student's ability to function in an educational setting;*
3. *A progressive loss of vision which may affect the student's ability to function in an academic setting; or*
4. *For children birth to five (5) years of age, bilateral lack of central, steady, or maintained fixation of vision with an estimated visual acuity of 20/70 or less after best possible correction; bilateral central scotoma involving the perimacula area (20/80 - 20/200); bilateral grade III, IV, or V Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP); or documented eye impairment as stated in paragraph (2)(a) of this rule.*

(b) *Educational. There is a documented functional vision loss which:*

1. *Inhibits optimal processing of information through the visual channel; and*
2. *Requires the use of specialized techniques, textbooks, materials, or equipment.*

Medical criteria are obtained from a recent eye medical examination. Educational criteria consist of those evaluations listed in Rule 6A-6.03014(4) 2-3, FAC, and are discussed in more detail in Section One: V, Student Evaluation Procedures, of this manual. The review of both sets of criteria by a staffing and

Individual Educational Plan (IEP) committee will provide useful information for determining eligibility for a special program for visually impaired and considerations of modifications in the student's instructional program.

Note: A glossary of terms related to visual impairments is included in the resource manual, Volume V-E: Project IVEY: Increasing Visual Efficiency. (Florida, 1983).

III. SCREENING PROCEDURES

Rule 6A-6.03411(2)(b), FAC: *Procedures for screening. Screening is that process by which a rapid assessment is made to identify candidates for formal evaluation.*

Rule 6A-6.03014(3), FAC: *Procedures for screening.*

(a) Vision screening is done solely for the purpose of referring students to an ophthalmologist or optometrist for further evaluation. A medical eye report shall take the place of a vision screening report.

(b) Screening shall be in accordance with Section 402.32, Florida Statutes. In addition, students being considered for exceptional student programs, excluding gifted and homebound or hospitalized who may be screened on a referral basis, shall receive vision, hearing, speech, and language screenings prior to being considered for eligibility.

Since a vision screening can be done at any time, teachers are encouraged to refer students for vision screening whenever signs of eye problems are noted.

The following is a suggested sequence for a screening program:

- Screenings should take place for incoming prekindergarten students, students in Grades K, 1, 7, and for new students (grades K through 5) entering the district. Students referred for exceptional student programs (excluding gifted and homebound/hospitalized) shall be screened prior to eligibility determination.

- Each district is responsible for developing a vision screening program to locate all children with suspected visual handicaps. The vision screening program should be ongoing, with each child screened upon entering the school system, in accordance with the Florida School Health Plan. Screening personnel should be trained in administering vision tests. The regional Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System, local units of the Society for the Prevention of Blindness, the public health department, and Red Cross programs are sources of training. Screening personnel may include (1) clinical mobile teams, (2) school/public health nurses, (3) eye specialists, and (4) members of service clubs and volunteers.

- All school personnel should be informed of the process to request a vision screening if specific eye problems are observed, regardless of the screening schedule. This enables prompt screening when vision difficulties are suspected.

- Screening should include tests for distance vision acuity. It is recommended that screening also include tests for near acuity, field loss, and color vision.

See Appendix A for recommended Vision Screening Training and Procedures.

IV. REFERRAL PROCEDURES

Rule 6A-6.03411(2)(d), FAC: *Procedures for referral. Referral is the process where a written request is made for a formal evaluation . . .*

A standard referral system must be established in each school district. Referrals may come from school personnel, parents, members of the medical profession, community agency personnel, the county health department, or may result from district screening procedures. Referrals should be directed to the appropriate person or committee for further action.

V. STUDENT EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Rule 6A-6.03014(4), FAC: *Procedures for student evaluation.*

(a) The minimum evaluation necessary for determining eligibility shall include:

1. A medical eye examination describing: etiology, diagnosis, treatment regimen, prognosis, near/distance and corrected/uncorrected acuity measures for left eye, right eye and both eyes, measure of field of vision, and recommendations for lighting levels, physical activity, aids, or use of glasses, as appropriate. For children birth to five (5) years of age, a medical assessment describing visual functioning shall be documented when standard visual acuities and measure of field of vision are unattainable.

2. Documented observation of functional vision to include daily living skills and mode of reading by a teacher of students with visual impairments or an appropriately trained diagnostician, and

3. Evaluation of developmental or academic functioning.

(b) Additional information including vocational and orientation and mobility evaluations may be gathered to assist in determining the appropriate educational program and necessary environmental adjustments for the student.

MEDICAL EYE EXAMINATION

All children referred will be examined by an ophthalmologist, optometrist, or other medical doctor, preferably before the evaluation of academic functioning is conducted.

Medical eye examination reports shall include the following information:

- Etiology - cause of eye problem.
- Diagnosis - pertinent medical history and present conditions.
- Treatment Regimen - glasses, medication prescribed.
- Prognosis - future outlook.
- Visual Acuity - uncorrected and corrected including low vision aid information, if prescribed. Near/distance information to be included.
- Measure of Field of Vision - This will be particularly important if the acuity is normal, but the diagnosis statement may be an indication of field loss, i.e., retinitis pigmentosa (peripheral loss), macular degeneration (central loss), scotomas, or heminaopsia type losses.
- Recommendations for Lighting Levels - Does the doctor recommend glare reduction or supplemental lighting for specific tasks?
- Recommendations for Physical Activity - Does the doctor recommend reduced activity? Any specific types?
- Recommendations for Use of Aids - Are any aids (magnifiers, telescopes, microscopes, special lenses, etc.) recommended for near or distances use?
- Recommendation for Use of Glasses - Are glasses prescribed? Are there any specific recommendations for their use?

For children birth to five years of age, the medical eye examination may describe visual functioning rather than standard visual acuities and measures of visual fields.

All of these pieces of information must be requested and should be included on the form that is used to communicate with the doctor when a visual impairment is suspected. If the form is returned with areas not completed, use professional judgment regarding the pertinence of that area of information. If in doubt, contact the doctor for follow-up information. When medical information is complete, proceed to the educational evaluations. See Appendix B for sample medical eye examination forms.

DOCUMENTED OBSERVATION OF FUNCTIONAL VISION

It is recommended that the functional vision observation precede the evaluation of academic functioning. Information obtained relating to a child's functional vision can be useful to evaluators who will assess the child's educational functioning. The functional vision observation can be individualized to focus on unique characteristics of the student's functional use of remaining vision. Someone with the ability to interpret medical information, structure the functional vision observation, and interpret the evaluation results, should perform this observation. Included in the functional vision observation is an assessment of daily living skills and mode of reading. See Appendix F for information on functional vision observation.

- Daily Living Skills - This includes assessment in such areas as personal hygiene, dressing, clothing care, housekeeping, food preparation, eating skills, handling money, telephone skills, time, socialization skills, recreation, etc. Since many of these skills are usually learned by observation, students with visual impairments often need instruction in basic skills, adapted methods, or use of special equipment. Use of checklists, observation of the student, and discussion with the student or the family will help in gathering information. Appendix C includes a resource list of daily living skills assessments for students with visual impairments.

- Mode of Reading - Instruction in reading and writing may involve the use of aids, adapted materials, alternative forms (e.g., Braille, typing), and listening skills. Evaluations in this area may be a part of the functional vision observation described in Rule 6A-6.03014(4)(a)3, FAC. Guidelines for assessing reading medium are described in Appendix D.

EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENTAL OR ACADEMIC FUNCTIONING

Educational information may be gathered from test data, teacher observation data, and informal checklists. Criterion-referenced resources, some standardized test instruments, and curriculum materials that have a developmental sequence will be helpful. If you are relying on standardized test data, be sure that their use is appropriate. Often, developmental or criterion-referenced information is more helpful in planning educational and environmental adjustments. Appendix C includes a resource listing of developmental or academic assessments for students with visual impairments.

Vocational and orientation and mobility evaluations are specialized evaluations to determine instructional needs and environmental adjustments of students with visual impairments and are conducted as deemed appropriate. Areas of evaluation for potential instruction include career awareness, sensory awareness, cognitive development as related to movement and travel (body image, laterality, directionality, spatial relationships, physical concepts), gross motor skills (balance, coordination, posture, gait), and travel skills (following directions, organization of environment, indoor/outdoor travel, quality of movement, use of electronic visual aids for travel). Some of these areas may be addressed by teachers of the visually impaired or trained diagnosticians, while others may be addressed by instructors in orientation and mobility. Appendix C includes a resource list of vocational and orientation and mobility assessments for students who are visually impaired.

Persons involved in assessing students with visual impairments should be aware of assessment concerns peculiar to this population. The following statement on testing for the visually impaired was developed with the assistance of the Statewide Task Force for the Visually Impaired (1981). It is offered to assist in the design and implementation of appropriate evaluation procedures for the visually impaired.

- Tests other than standardized, norm-referenced tests are more appropriate for measuring skills of students with visual impairments. Criterion-referenced tests, structured teacher observation, and developmental curriculum programs are suggested for use.

- If standardized (norm-referenced) tests must be used, results should be used only for diagnostic purposes, as scores are not necessarily valid.
- If standardized tests are used, code the results to show that test circumstances (format, environment, etc.) were modified in response to the student's visual impairment.

Refer to Appendix E for guidelines on modifications for testing of students with visual impairments.

The evaluation of academic functioning and the functional vision observation should be completed by qualified personnel. Deficits in academic functioning may indicate the need for further evaluation such as cognitive or process assessment. Parental permission must be secured prior to the evaluation of academic functioning and functional vision observation and should indicate the type of evaluations being given.

VI. DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

Rule 6A-6.03411(2)(f), FAC: *Procedures for determining eligibility.*

Determining eligibility is the process in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331(2)(4), FAC, whereby professionals review student data to determine whether or not the student meets the criteria for eligibility for a special program.

District procedures will specify the composition of the staffing committee in accordance with the requirements of Rule 6A-6.0331(2)(b), FAC, and the procedures for determining student eligibility.

COMPOSITION OF STAFFING COMMITTEE

The staffing committee must consist of a minimum of three professional personnel, one of whom is the district administrator of the exceptional student education program or designee. The staffing committee may also include the parent, principal or designee, optometrist/ophthalmologist, teacher of the visually impaired, school psychologist, the student's teacher(s), representative from exceptional student education, representative from the Division of Blind Services, or representative from the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, when appropriate.

PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

The staffing committee reviews all diagnostic data to make a recommendation of eligibility for a special program. Final responsibility for determining the student's eligibility for participation in the district's program(s) for exceptional students must rest with either the administrator of exceptional student education or designee, as specified in the Special Programs and Procedures document.

Once eligibility is determined, a committee will be responsible for developing an individual educational plan (IEP), reviewing all relevant information, and recommending an appropriate educational placement for the eligible student.

A written summary of the staffing must document the date, names of persons participating, and recommendations made. An individual report should be prepared for the student's file. Each student's parents or guardians should be given a report of the Exceptional Student Education Administrator's determination of eligibility or ineligibility, be informed that they are entitled to a review of the determination, and be provided with the procedures for obtaining such a review.

VII. PROVIDING AN INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN

Rule 6A-6.03411(2)(g), FAC: *Procedures for providing an individual educational plan in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331(3), FAC.*

Rule 6A-6.0331(3), FAC: *Each district shall develop an individual educational plan for each exceptional student.*

(a) An individual educational plan consists of written statements including:

1. *A statement of the student's present levels of educational performance;*
2. *A statement of annual goals, including short term instructional objectives;*
3. *A statement of the specific special education and related services to be provided to the student and the extent to which the student will be able to participate in regular educational programs;*
4. *The projected dates for initiation of services and the anticipated duration of the services; and*
5. *Appropriate objective criteria and evaluation procedures and schedules for determining, on at least an annual basis, whether the short term instructional objectives are being achieved.*

Section 230.23 (4)(m)3, Florida Statutes: The school board annually provide information describing the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind and all other programs and methods of instruction available to the parent or guardian of a sensory-impaired student.

DEVELOPING THE INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN (IEP)

The following requirements apply to all IEPs:

- Individual educational plan (Florida rule terminology) is considered synonymous with individualized educational program (federal regulation terminology).
- A current IEP shall be available for each exceptional student.
- The IEP shall be written prior to placement of a student in an exceptional student program.

- The IEP defines the special education and related services to be provided to the exceptional student.
- The IEP shall be reviewed at least annually.

CONTENTS OF IEP

The district may develop guidelines to assist the IEP committee in making placement decisions. It is essential that these guidelines be used as flexible criteria in determining the most appropriate program for a student. The student's needs must have primary consideration. Placement in visually impaired programs must be based on the extent to which specific programs are necessary to achieve an appropriate education for a particular individual. This decision is directly driven by the contents of the IEP.

- **Present levels of educational performance** are statements of a student's performance, as appropriate, in areas including, but not limited to, concept development, academic skills, communication skills, social and emotional skills, career and vocational skills, as well as a statement regarding sensory/motor skills, orientation and mobility skills, daily living skills, and specially designed physical education. The statements should include appropriate information on demonstrated skill mastery, grade or age levels, or performance. Where appropriate, the assessment or curriculum which was used to determine the level should be referenced. The primary purpose of stating the student's present levels of performance is to focus the attention of IEP planners on the strengths and weaknesses of the student. The IEP goals and objectives should be generated directly from these statements.
- **Annual goals** are statements reflecting a reasonable expectation of what the student can achieve at the end of the current academic year or one year in a special program. Annual goals shall include statements of the expected skill mastery or performance. Goal statements may be formulated addressing both in-school and out-of-school behavior.
- **Short-term instructional objectives** are statements that describe the observable behavior to be demonstrated and the conditions under which the student will demonstrate mastery. At least two short-term instructional objectives shall be specified for each stated annual goal. The scope of the short-term objectives shall reflect learning outcomes projected for a period of time less than a year, e.g., a grading period or semester.
- **Special education and related services** statements for students with visual impairments are included on the IEP. Special education services may include adaptations to programming such as the curriculum, methodology, materials, equipment, or environment. Other special education services may include speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, orientation and mobility training, as well as special classroom instruction for the student with a visual impairment. Related services are those appropriate services, in addition to those specified as special education, required for the exceptional student to benefit from education. Related services include the following:

--special transportation
--diagnostic and evaluation services
--psychological services
--social services
--guidance and parent counseling
--school health services
--medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes
--braillists, typists, or readers for the blind
--specialized materials and equipment
--support agencies such as Division of Blind Services (DBS).
--services of Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Handicapped (FIMC/VH)

Information regarding FIMC/VH and DBS is provided in Appendices G and H.

- **Participation in regular education programs** are statements which describe the student's participation in basic or vocational education, specifying the amount of time per week. Time spent in special programs may be indicated using a range of up to 6 hours.

- **Anticipated initiation** date is the projected date(s) upon which each program and related service specified in the IEP is expected to begin.

- **Anticipated duration** is the projected date(s) upon which each program and related service is expected to end or to be reviewed. This may not exceed one year from the initiation date.

- **Transition services** include a coordinated set of activities for a handicapped student which promotes movement from school to post-school activities. A statement of needed transition services should be developed in the eighth grade IEP meeting, included on the IEP, and reviewed annually.

- **Review date** is the date on which the IEP must be reviewed. The projected review date listed must be prior to the termination of the IEP and no later than one year from the date the IEP was written. IEPs can be reviewed more often. It is recommended that districts list the month, day, and year of the initiation date and the review date.

- **Evaluation criteria, procedures, and schedules** include
  --the objective criteria to be used in determining mastery
  --the test or data collection device which will provide a direct measure of skills performance and mastery
  --dates for administering the evaluations.

- **Additional information** which may be found on the IEP may include placement in a varying exceptionalities class, test modifications, diploma options (if eligible through a secondary disability), course modifications, and participation in district testing programs.

It is recommended that districts comply with Section 230.23(4)(m)3, F.S., by providing to the parent, at the time of the IEP meeting, a brief description of the FSDB and all other programs and services available to students with sensory impairments. A booklet describing services in Florida is available through the Clearinghouse/Information Center, Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students, 628 Florida Education Center, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400. (Ask for Florida's Educational Opportunities for the Sensory Impaired.)

VIII. PLACEMENT

Rule 6A-6.0341(2)(e)2, FAC: *Placement is the professional determination of an eligible student's educational assignment based upon the student's assessed needs and consideration of program alternatives.*

Special Programs and Procedures documents will specify procedures for determining student placement (Rule 6A-6.0341(2)(e), FAC) and criteria for making assignment decisions consistent with Section 230.23(4)(m)6, Florida Statutes.

Once eligibility is confirmed, a committee will be responsible for developing an individual educational plan (IEP), reviewing all relevant information, and recommending an appropriate educational placement for the eligible student. A number of factors influence the placement decision. The fundamental issue is the extent of the child's needs and the services required to meet those needs adequately. Placement determination should take into account the IEP and the following factors:

- extent of the child's need for specialized instruction
- developmental level or grade placement
- degree of independence and maturity
- nature and extent of visual handicap
- nature and extent of additional handicaps
- recency of onset of visual handicaps
- quality of home and community support
- availability of specialized services and resources
- geographic circumstances and extent of travel required
- preferences of parent and child
- results from previous placements. (Tuttle, 1986)

The student's individual educational plan will be reviewed at least annually and a decision made as to the placement appropriate for the child. If the data indicate that changes are needed in the student's placement, the staffing committee should review data and recommend change of placement or referral for further reevaluation.

ASSIGNMENT DECISION TO BE MADE CONSISTENT WITH SECTION 230.23(4)(m), FLORIDA STATUTES

Section 230.23(4)(m)6, Florida Statutes: *In providing for the education of exceptional students, the superintendent, principals, and teachers shall utilize the regular school facilities and adapt them to the needs of exceptional students whenever this is possible. No student shall be segregated and taught apart from normal students until a careful study of the student's case has been made and evidence obtained which indicates that segregation would be for the student's benefit or is necessary because of difficulties involved in teaching the student in a regular class.*

Placement recommendations for the student with a visual impairment may include

- basic (regular) class placement with supplementary consultative services,
- basic (regular) class placement with services from an itinerant teacher of the visually impaired,
- basic (regular) class placement supplemented by resource room instruction for the visually impaired,
- special class (self-contained) for the visually impaired, or
- enrollment in the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind.

Students with visual impairments and other identified handicapping conditions may be placed in exceptional classes accordingly and receive consultative, itinerant, or resource instruction from a teacher of visually impaired. Flexibility in utilizing several service delivery models in combination for varied lengths of time is recommended to meet individual student's unique needs. Placement is reviewed annually when the IEP is written, or more often, if needed (See Section Two: Instructional Procedures for more information).

IX. RE-EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Rule 6A-6.0331(1)(c), FAC: *The district shall provide a re-evaluation of each exceptional student at least every three (3) years . . .*

Rule 6A-6.03411(2)(i), FAC: *Re-evaluation is the process whereby information about a student is gathered and reviewed to determine the need for continuation in the special program. The following steps are required:*

1) An evaluation specialist and an exceptional student teacher shall examine available information in all areas addressed in the initial evaluation or in subsequent re-evaluations of the student and shall make the appropriate referral(s) for one or more formal evaluations based on their examination and the requirements of Rules 6A-6.03011 through 6A-6.03025, FAC. When necessary, another member of the instructional or supervisory staff may substitute for the exceptional student teacher.

2) A meeting of the individual educational plan committee or the staffing committee shall be convened to review all available information about the student including reports from the additional evaluations, and to consider the need for continuation in the special program. If the student is to continue in the special program(s), the student's individual educational plan shall be reviewed in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331(3), FAC.

3) If the re-evaluation indicates that the special program is no longer needed or that program changes may be warranted, the applicable dismissal or eligibility staffing procedures shall be followed.

Rule 6A-6.03014(4)(c), FAC: *Reevaluation shall occur at least every three (3) years and shall include evaluations in accordance with paragraph (4)(a) of this rule. The medical aspect of reevaluation for students with bilateral anophthalmia may be waived by a written recommendation of a physician.*

The purpose of re-evaluation is to determine the continued eligibility of a student and to provide additional data for program revision. A medical eye examination, evaluation of academic functioning, and a functional vision observation including daily living skills and mode of reading assessment identifying educational and environmental adjustments are required. It is not necessary to obtain parental consent for re-evaluations, but parents must be given written notice that the re-evaluation is to be done.

X. DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Rule 6A-6.0341(2)(g), FAC: *Procedures for dismissal or re-assignment. Dismissal is the process whereby a student is removed from participation in a special program.*

A student may be dismissed from a program for the visually impaired if evidence from the student evaluation process indicates that the student no longer needs a special program.

SECTION TWO: INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

I. Program Objectives
II. Program Organization
III. Instructional Programs and Curriculum
IV. Prekindergarten Services
V. Evaluation of Student Performance
VI. Program Evaluation

SECTION TWO: INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

I. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Overall planning and curriculum programming efforts should result in independence for the learner with a visual impairment. The instructional courses offered by the school to all pupils should be available to students with visual impairments as well. In addition, specialized adaptations and instruction must be available to meet the unique needs of the student with a visual impairment. The program objectives relating to the development of special skills for a student with a visual impairment should include

- instruction in safe and independent travel,
- instruction in use of remaining vision,
- instruction in use of adapted materials in the classroom setting (e.g., abacus, slate, and stylus, etc.),
- instruction in utilization of appropriate communication skills (e.g., Braille, computer, etc.),
- instruction in use of appropriate skills to maintain activities of daily living and develop independence,
- development of vocational and career awareness, and
- instruction in use of appropriate technology.

II. PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

Rule 6A-6.03411(2)(a), FAC: *Procedures shall ensure that no exceptional student is taught apart from other students without evidence that segregation would be for the exceptional student's benefit or is necessary due to difficulties involved in providing a program for the student in a regular class . . .*

Rule 6A-6.0311, FAC: *Eligible Special Programs for Exceptional Students. Special programs for exceptional students encompass instruction and related services which provide significant adaptations in one or more of the following: curriculum, methodology, materials, equipment, or environment designed to meet the individual learning needs of exceptional students.*

Rule 6A-6.0311(1), FAC: *Continuum of placements. Special programs shall be organized so that an exceptional student shall receive instruction in one or more of the following ways:*

(a) Supplementary consultation or related services. Supplementary consultation or related services is the provision of assistance to school staff in basic, vocational, or exceptional classes.

(b) Resource room. Resource room special instruction is supplemented instruction to exceptional students who receive their major educational program in other basic, vocational, or exceptional classes.

(c) Special class. Special class is the provision of instruction to exceptional students who receive the major portion of their educational program in special classes located in a regular school.

(d) *Special day school. A special day school is a school which is administratively separate from regular schools and is organized to serve one or more types of exceptional students.*

(e) *Residential school. A residential school is a special school which in addition to providing special education and related services, provides room and board.*

(f) *Special class in a hospital or facility operated by a noneducational agency.*

(g) *Individual instruction in a hospital or home.*

(h) *In addition, districts may provide supplementary instructional personnel to public or nonpublic preschool or daycare programs for the instruction of prekindergarten exceptional students.*

Rule 6A-6.0311(3) (b), FAC: *When a district provides a special program for exceptional students by assigning instructional personnel to a facility operated by another agency or organization, a written agreement shall be developed outlining the respective duties and responsibilities of each party. . . .*

In placing a student in the most appropriate educational setting, it is important to remember that one exclusive placement option cannot provide the ideal educational program for all students. The guiding principle should be that of a least restrictive environment, and to the maximum extent appropriate, students with visual impairments should be educated within the general education program and as close to their home as possible. A variety of placement options must be available in order to provide an appropriate placement for any exceptional student, at any particular time. The more placement options available, the greater the discretion that can be exercised in providing an appropriate program for the student.

In addition to the placement options available in local school districts, the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB) in St. Augustine provides for the education of prekindergarten through secondary school students with visual impairments in a residential setting. Programs and services are provided in academic areas, orientation and mobility, home and personal management, basic prevocational training, limited vocational training, and computer training. See Appendix I, FSDB.

In order to implement program options, one or more school districts may cooperate in a multidistrict program. Certain activities become the responsibility of the host district or the participating district; however, each district must have appropriately written and approved procedures which include a signed copy of the agreement. Host district responsibilities may include employing a teacher of the visually impaired and supplying facilities, transportation, and materials as needed. The sending district's responsibilities may include observing district procedures in identification, eligibility, and placement activities; providing transportation; and sharing costs. See Appendix J, Special Funding Program for the Visually Impaired.

Rule 6A-6.0311(2), FAC: *Varying exceptionalities. A varying exceptionalities class is a setting which may provide for assignment of students of more than one*

(1) exceptionality to one (1) teacher per instructional class period, or more than one (1) exceptionality to one (1) teacher during a school week.

- (a) *If a school district establishes varying exceptionalities classes, procedures for this program shall be set forth in Special Programs and Procedures for Exceptional Students as required by Rule 6A-6.03411, FAC.*

A varying exceptionalities (VE) class is composed of students eligible for any exceptional student program. The class can provide for two or more exceptionalities simultaneously or provide for a different exceptionality in different periods of the school day.

A teacher of varying exceptionalities must be certified in one of the following areas: Varying Exceptionalities (VE), Emotionally Handicapped (EH), Mentally Handicapped (MH), or Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD). It is recommended that the teacher hold certification which corresponds to the exceptionality of the majority of the students in the classroom. In instances where the teacher needs additional training to instruct the students who are placed in the class, the district must provide needed training. This could include sending the teacher to workshops, appointing a peer teacher, or assigning a supervisor who is competent in the deficit areas.

If a district uses VE classes, the district identifies the types of exceptional students that can be grouped or the proportion of exceptionalities allowed in a varying exceptionalities classroom. For each exceptional student, the IEP must clearly state the special instruction to be provided based on the unique needs of the student. It is recommended that students be grouped according to functional levels.

III. INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND CURRICULUM

Rule 6A-6.03411(3)(c), FAC: *Instructional program. Philosophy, curriculum, and instructional support.*

Rule 6A-6.0311, FAC: *Eligible Special Programs for Exceptional Students. Special programs for exceptional students encompass instruction and related services which provide significant adaptations in one or more of the following: curriculum, methodology, materials, equipment, or environment designed to meet the individual learning needs of exceptional students.*

Rule 6A-6.03014(5), FAC: *Instructional program. Instruction in orientation and mobility shall be included when appropriate.*

PHILOSOPHY

The district's philosophy in providing services for students with visual impairments should be described in general terms, including goals and educational orientation of the exceptional program. Goals can be broken into statements which describe the intended outcomes or benefits to the exceptional student; the support and assistance to the student, parents, teachers, and regular educational program; and assurances for the monitoring of student progress and program effectiveness.

The educational orientation should identify the overall philosophy or approach chosen as the framework for the educational services. This may include reference to the educational settings, including a continuum of service availability, curriculum, and methodology.

CURRICULUM

A written curriculum or implementation plan consisting of unique skills to be provided in the program for students with visual impairments should be developed or adopted by each district. The curriculum should be approved and adopted for districtwide use by the local school district to provide continuity.

Programs for students with visual impairments should meet the students' present needs as well as prepare them to meet vocational and independent living goals. Within the students' regular educational curriculum, modifications and adaptations are developed through cooperative work between regular and special education teachers.

Academic assistance may be needed by the student with a visual impairments to maintain proper levels of achievement in the regular classroom. The teacher of the visually impaired can determine the assistance needed through consultation with the classroom teacher and can give whatever assistance is needed.

Instructional areas of the implementation plan offered, in addition to the students' regular education curriculum, become the major responsibility of the teacher of the visually impaired. These instructional skills should include the following areas:

- communication (adaptive reading and writing modes, technology, listening, low vision aids, and non-verbal communication)
- orientation and mobility (low vision training, guide skills, body concepts, spatial concepts, protective techniques, and independent travel skills)
- social skills (safety, poise, independence, daily living techniques, interpersonal skills, health, family and peer relationships, recreation and leisure skills)
- curricular adaptations (preacademic and academic unique skill instruction)
- prevocational and vocational training (study skills, career education and evaluation, and transition activities).

The Florida Catalog of Unique Skills for Exceptional Students contains listings of skills which exceptional students are expected to learn but which are not taught in the basic or vocational programs. The skills are classified into the following functional groups:

- Living skills are the fundamental skills which enable an individual to function as independently as possible, and which include personal care (dressing, hygiene, toileting, eating, and grooming); sexuality; health, first aid, and safety; home care; community living; and leisure time and recreation.
- Social skills are those skills which enable a student to respond appropriately to school, home, and community environments, and which include the ability to build and maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships, to behave appropriately in social situations, and to solve interpersonal and intrapersonal problems appropriately.
- Learning skills are those skills which enable an individual to acquire knowledge by study and experience, utilizing sensory input, and which include those skills needed by an exceptional student to retrieve, organize, conceptualize, or synthesize information.
- Communication skills are those skills which enable a student to transmit or receive concepts, ideas, information, thoughts, or feelings. These skills may be verbal, vocal, read, written, gestural, or augmented.

A secondary student may receive credit for a course which specifies the acquisition of these unique skills. Special courses have been developed to group these skills. For example, "ESE Skills for Visually Impaired Learners" is the course in which unique skills may be taught. If needed, the course may be repeated for additional credit. When no special course adequately describes the appropriate content for a student, the IEP committee may design a course drawing the outcomes and performance standards from The Florida Catalog of Unique Skills. The course is entitled "ESE Unique Skills."

COURSE MODIFICATIONS

Section 232.246(5), Florida Statutes, authorizes district school boards to modify courses and programs for exceptional students.

(a) *A district school board may require specific courses and programs of study within the minimum credit requirements for high school graduation and shall modify basic courses, as necessary, to assure exceptional students the opportunity to meet the graduation requirements for a standard diploma, using one of the following strategies:*

1. *Assignment of the exceptional student to an exceptional education class for instruction in a basic course with the same student performance standards as those required of non-exceptional students in the district pupil progression plan; or*
2. *Assignment of the exceptional student to a basic education class for instruction which is modified to accommodate the student's exceptionality.*

(b) *The district shall determine which of these strategies to employ based upon an assessment of the student's needs and shall reflect this decision in the student's individual educational plan.*

Modifications to basic courses shall not include modifications to the curriculum frameworks or student performance standards. Any of the following modifications are appropriate.

- The instructional time may be increased or decreased.
- Instructional strategies may be varied.
- Special communications systems may be used by the teacher or the student.
- Classroom and district test administration procedures and other evaluation procedures may be modified as specified in Rule 6A-1.0943, FAC, to accommodate the student's handicap. See Appendix E for Testing Modifications for the Visually Impaired.

Exceptional students enrolled in modified courses shall be counted at exceptional student special program cost factors only if the class is being taught in a special program for exceptional students by a teacher qualified in accordance with Rule 6A-1.0503, FAC.

The Course Code Directory lists courses for exceptional students. Those applicable to a student with a visual impairment include the following:

7763060	Orientation and Mobility: PK-5
7763080	Unique Skills Vision: PK-5
7863060	Orientation and Mobility: 6-8
7863080	Unique Skills Vision: 6-8
*7963010	ESE-Skills for Independent Living (9-12)
*7963050	ESE-Unique Skills for Visually Impaired Learners (9-12)
*7963060	ESE-Orientation and Mobility Skills (9-12)
*7963070	ESE-Social and Personal Skills (9-12)
*7963130	ESE-Unique Skills (9-12)
*7902010	ESE-Computers for Special Learners (9-12)

*Courses designed for exceptional students only and may be used for elective credit.

Courses at 9-12 grade levels are described in terms of major content, laboratory activities, and intended outcomes with special notes included. These descriptions can be found in Curriculum Frameworks for Grades 9-12, Exceptional Student Education Courses available from the Clearinghouse/Information Center. Other courses appropriate for exceptional students may be selected from those in basic education and may be modified as described earlier.

While these courses can only be taken for elective credit, the suggested student performance standards will be useful in identifying appropriate goals and short-term objectives for a student with a visual impairment.

School boards have the authority to modify regular courses for exceptional students. The IEP staffing committee will determine whether these modifications are most appropriately carried out in the regular program in a mainstreaming situation or within the context of a special education classroom. It is recommended that these modifications be documented on the student's IEP. Modifications may be provided to the entire group of exceptional students, or designated for individual students. The superintendent, principals, and teachers are required to use regular school facilities and adapt them to the needs of exceptional students whenever this is possible.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Rule 6A-6.03014(6), FAC. *Supportive services. The district shall make available the professional services needed to support the program. These shall include registration of all students for services of the Florida Instructional Materials Center for Visually Handicapped. Other support services may include, but not be limited to:*

1) *Provision of specialized textbooks, learning materials and equipment; and*

2) *Cooperative planning with the Division of Blind Services, including parent involvement activities.*

Support services are required to meet the needs of students with visual handicaps. The assistance offered will enable the student to make greater progress toward optimal growth and development.

Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS)

The Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System includes Associate Centers, Specialized Centers, and the Clearinghouse/Information Center. Associate Centers comprise a federal and state funded network of 18 centers operating statewide. These centers provide, for each of the district exceptional student education programs, support services and assistance in student identification and evaluation, inservice training, media, materials, and consultation. The FDLRS Associate Centers are listed below.

- FDLRS/Westgate Associate Center, 30 E. Texar Drive, Pensacola, Florida 32503, 904/469-5423
  Serving Escambia, Okaloosa, and Santa Rosa Counties

- FDLRS/PAEC Associate Center, 411 W. Boulevard, Chipley, Florida 32428, 904/638-6131
  Serving Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Franklin, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Walton, and Washington Counties

- FDLRS/Miccosukee Associate Center, 1950 W. Tennessee Street, Suite 10
  High Road Corner, Tallahassee, Florida 32304, 904/487-2630 or 488-4150
  Serving Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Taylor, and Wakulla Counties

- FDLRS/Gateway Associate Center, P. O. Box 1387, Jasper, Florida 32052-1387, 904/792-2877
  Serving Columbia, Hamilton, Lafayette, Madison, and Suwannee Counties

- FDLRS/NEFEC Associate Center, Route 1, Box 8500, 3841 Reid Street, Palatka, Florida 32177, 904/329-3800
  Serving Baker, Bradford, Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns, and Union Counties

- FDLRS/Crown Associate Center, 1450 Flagler Avenue, Room 15, Jacksonville, Florida 32207, 904/390-2154
  Serving Clay, Duval, and Nassau Counties

- FDLRS/Springs Associate Center, 3881 N.W. 155th Street, Reddick, Florida 32686, 904/591-4300
  Serving Alachua, Citrus, Dixie, Gilchrist, Levy, and Marion Counties

- FDLRS/Action Associate Center, 1600 Silver Star Road, Orlando, Florida 32804, 407/293-5841
  Serving Lake, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Sumter Counties

- FDLRS/East Associate Center, Educational Services Facilities, 2700 St. Johns Street, Melbourne, Florida 32940-6699, 407/633-1000
  Serving Brevard and Volusia Counties

- FDLRS/Galaxie Associate Center, 1901 S. 11th Street, Ft. Pierce, Florida 34950, 407/468-5385
  Serving Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, and St. Lucie Counties

- FDLRS/Gulfcoast Associate Center, 1895 Gulf-to-Bay Boulevard, Clearwater, Florida 34625, 813/442-1171
  Serving Hernando, Pasco, and Pinellas Counties

- FDLRS/Hillsborough Associate Center, Department of Education for Exceptional Students, 411 East Henderson Avenue, Tampa, Florida 33602, 813/272-4555
  Serving Hillsborough County

- FDLRS/III Associate Center, 1062 N. Broadway Avenue, Bartow, Florida 33830, 813/534-2877
  Serving Hardee, Highlands, and Polk Counties

- FDLRS/Suncoast Associate Center, 1135 Gun Club Road, Sarasota, Florida 34232, 813/378-4283
  Serving Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee, and Sarasota Counties
- FDLRS/Big Cypress Associate Center, Collier County Public Schools, Administration Center, 3706 Estey Avenue, Naples, Florida 33942, 813/643-2700
  Serving Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee Counties

- FDLRS/Alpha Associate Center, Cedar Square, 2112 S. Congress Avenue, West Palm Beach, Florida 33406, 407/433-3500
  Serving Palm Beach County

- FDLRS/Reach Associate Center, 1400 N.E. 6th Street, Pompano Beach, Florida 33060, 305/786-7699
  Serving Broward County

- FDLRS/South Associate Center, 5555 S.W. 93rd Avenue, Miami, Florida 33165, 305/274-3501
  Serving Dade and Monroe Counties

Also included in the FDLRS network are 11 specialized centers that provide specific support services as indicated by their titles. The most applicable centers for students who are visually impaired are listed below.

- CSEC/Communication Systems Evaluation Center, 434 North Tampa Avenue, Station 702, Orlando, Florida 32802, 407/423-9212 or 407/422-3200

- FIMCVH/Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Handicapped, 5002 North Lois Avenue, Tampa, Florida 33614, 813/876-5016 or 800/282-9193 (See Appendix G.)

- FSDB/Outreach Project, 207 North San Marco Avenue, St. Augustine, Florida 32084, 904/823-4040

- FDLRS/FSU/Regional Evaluation and Consulting Center, 312 Regional Rehabilitation Center, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida 32206, 904/644-2222

- FDLRS/USF/Multidisciplinary Diagnostic and Evaluation Services, 3500 East Fletcher Avenue, Suite 225, Tampa, Florida 33612, 813/974-5001

- FDLRS/UF/Multidisciplinary Diagnostic and Training Program, Box J-282, JHM Health Center, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida 32610, 904/392-6442 or 904/392-5874

- FDLRS/Mailman/Multidisciplinary Evaluation Services, University of Miami, P.O. Box 016820, Miami, Florida 33101, 305/547-6624

- FDLRS/TECH/Instructional Technology Training Resource Unit, Educational Services Facilities, 2700 St. Johns Street, Melbourne, Florida 32940, 407/633-1000

Clearinghouse/Information Center

The Clearinghouse/Information Center, a specialized center in the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS), operates through the Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students as a centralized professional and parent resource center and coordinating unit for exceptional student education information and materials services statewide.

- Clearinghouse Loan Collection

  The Clearinghouse collects, catalogs, and circulates professional- and parent-use resources in exceptional student education. These resources include over 1,000 films and videotapes as well as extensive materials produced by commercial publishers; national, state, and local programs and projects; and organizations and individuals concerned with special education. These materials are available for loan and are described in these Clearinghouse specialized catalogs: Resources for Parents of Exceptional Students, Florida-Developed Resources for Exceptional Student Education, Film and Video Resources for Exceptional Student Education, Resources for Educators of the Severely/Profoundly Handicapped, and Technology Resources in Exceptional Student Education.

- Information Services

  The Clearinghouse/Information center provides access to the ERIC database, which contains over 400,000 journal annotations and 300,000 education related-document abstracts. Computer searches on topics of interest may be obtained by contacting the Clearinghouse.

- Technical Assistance and Training

  The Clearinghouse assists school districts, FDLRS centers, agencies, organizations, and professionals in promoting awareness and use of professional resources in exceptional student education. These services include displays of Clearinghouse resources, and technical assistance and training related to the operation of information and materials services.

- Publications Services

  The Clearinghouse maintains an inventory of all Department of Education publications related to exceptional student education. These publications include resource manuals for laws and rules, programs, training, curriculum, and program evaluation; annual reports, statistical reports; technical assistance papers; research and program reports; program publications; parent services materials; prekindergarten resources, and Clearinghouse catalogs.

Florida's Division of Blind Services (DBS), Department of Education (See Appendix H.)

DBS provides a variety of medical and social services to children with visual impairments in conjunction with district and FSDB services.

Florida Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped P. O. Box 2299, Daytona Beach, Florida 32015 (1-800-342-5627)

This lending library provides recreational reading material as well as general information related to visual impairments.

Transportation

For the utilization of transportation services, the administrator of the exceptional student program should consider two procedural steps for the transportation of students: (1) the use of basic transportation provisions existing in the district for those students who can ride the regular school buses, and (2) the arrangement for special transportation for students with handicaps who cannot use existing transportation facilities.

Utilizing basic transportation already in existence may involve only a cooperative effort between the administrator of the exceptional student program and district personnel concerned with transportation. Such cooperation may include planning for scheduling and routing.

When students with visual impairments are transported to special classes or schools, transportation should be arranged as suitable to the health and safety of the students. Drivers should be made aware of the unique needs of students with visual impairments in case of emergency situations. Students should be encouraged to travel independently to and from school when they have the necessary orientation and mobility skills.

Student Services Personnel

Services provided by the student services team (psychologist, social worker, guidance counselor, educational diagnostician, program specialist, and contracted medical staff) are essential to support of the program for students with visual impairments. Exceptional educators should coordinate services with this team and provide assistance to them in understanding the unique needs of students with visual impairments.

Parents

Parental support and cooperation are key factors in the success of a program for students with visual impairments. Better communication is established when students, parents, and teachers formulate educational goals together.

a. Parent Involvement. Parents are fully involved in all decisions that affect the educational programming of their child. In order to meet the procedural safeguards standards for identification, evaluation, and educational placement of exceptional students, the following procedures must be considered. The relevant rules of the State Board of Education are cited where applicable.

   (1) Upon referral, obtain written consent for evaluation from the parents (Rule 6A-6.03311(2)(a), FAC).

(2) Obtain written consent from the parents before placement into a special program for exceptional students (Rule 6A-6.03311(2)(b), FAC).

(3) Provide parents the opportunity to review periodically the educational placement and program through the annual review of the IEP (Rule 6A-6.0331(3)(c)2.c, FAC).

(4) Provide parents with the opportunity for an impartial hearing regarding placement and program activities, including the right to

- receive timely and specific notice of such hearing
- review their child's educational records
- obtain independent evaluation
- be represented by counsel and cross-examine
- present evidence and bring witnesses
- receive a complete and accurate record of the proceedings
- appeal the decision, (Rule 6A-6.0331(5), FAC).

(5) Assignment of a surrogate parent shall be provided for a student when

- the student's parent(s) or guardian is not known
- the student's parent(s) are unavailable
- the student is a ward of the state, (Rule 6A-6.0333, FAC).

(6) Parents must be provided access to their child's educational records (Rule 6A-6.01955(6)(b), FAC). Student performance should be reported periodically regarding progress in the classroom.

b. Parent Information. Parents or guardians must be informed of their right to participate in meetings concerning the placement and educational planning for their child. The parents or guardian must be informed of the date, time, and location of the eligibility staffing committee meetings. They must be invited to the IEP committee meetings. Notations indicating method and date of parent contact and involvement should be recorded (Rule 6A-6.331(3)(d), FAC). It is the responsibility of the school district to ensure that parents be fully informed of their rights and opportunities for involvement.

c. Parent Education. Parents should be encouraged to work closely with the professional staff to share information and provide continuity between home and school. Parents should also be informed of specific ways in which the student may be helped at home.

The school system and other community agencies should provide parent education services. These may be offered through group discussions, workshops, or counseling.

The Clearinghouse/Information Center, Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students, provides information that may be helpful for parents of visually impaired children. The second edition of the publication, An Annotated Bibliography of Preschool Handicapped Parent Information and Materials, includes annotations of over two hundred fifty

(250) print and non-print items available on loan to parents of exceptional children. Another valuable resource is the five volume series For Parents of Exceptional Students . . . An Information Series. This package is produced by the Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students and provides comprehensive coverage of all aspects of special education. The following titles are included:

Booklet One:	*Educating Florida's Exceptional Students*
Booklet Two:	*The Individual Education Program IEP*
Booklet Three:	*Rights and Responsibilities*
Booklet Four:	*Resources and References*
Booklet Five:	*Parent's Educational Records*

Family Network on Disabilities of Florida is at statewide organization of Florida is a statewide organization designed to support and empower families of students with special needs through training and education. For information call 1-800- TALKPEN.

d. Parent Responsibilities. Parents can assist the school in many ways to provide an appropriate educational program for their children.

(1) Parents should make every effort to participate in the opportunities provided for educational evaluation and planning.

(2) A two-way channel for communication should be maintained by the parents and the school. This will help to alert the school to potential problems and expedite solutions.

(3) Mutual support for the goals and instructional activities of the child by parents and school personnel are essential. Praise for jobs well done will be reinforcing and will encourage continued effort.

(4) Parents can provide many opportunities to broaden the child's experiences.

IV. PREKINDERGARTEN SERVICES

Section 232.01(1)(e), Florida Statutes, permits districts to provide innovative instructional programs for exceptional students who are hearing impaired, visually impaired, dual sensory impaired, severely physically handicapped, trainable mentally handicapped, or profoundly handicapped, or who have established conditions of or exhibit developmental delays. Such programs shall begin on the child's third birthday and may begin at birth.

Early identification of the child with a visual handicap is extremely important to parents and their children. A determined effort should be made to alert health, welfare, social agencies, and medical facilities to the importance of such early identification, and of the procedures for referring children with visual impairments for early program planning. The emotional impact of visual handicaps may be reduced through appropriate early childhood interventions, including

- education of the parent in developing awareness of expected growth and development of their child

- personal counseling and guidance in securing appropriate health, family, and educational services provided by qualified specialists

- implementation of strategies designed to diminish the impact of the visual handicap through sensory stimulation, body image, gross- and fine-motor skills, sensory-perceptual motor activities, and experientially based cognitive and language development.

Home programs may be provided for students with visual impairments from birth to five years of age. Provisions for prekindergarten programs, ages birth to five years, may include

- contracts with community agencies

- services within the school setting

- supplemental services through Head Start

- public school teachers providing services through such nonpublic agencies as daycare centers or private nurseries

- cooperative arrangements with participation in programs sponsored through the Division of Blind Services

- referral to FSDB INSITE program of outreach.

Instruction should provide emphasis in language (with focus on vocabulary and experiential activities), low vision stimulation activities, cognitive activities (with focus on strengthening use of other senses, particularly tactual and reasoning), fine- and gross-motor activities (with focus on independent movements), orientation and mobility training (with focus on developmental and concept training), and self-care skills.

V. EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Evaluation should be an ongoing process involving all individuals associated with the student's education. Internal observations and feedback among staff members and parents provide valuable insights concerning approaches and strategies to use with the student. Structured evaluations among staff members may also be useful in securing greater consistency in philosophy and methods, which will ultimately be expressed in a more effective instructional program for each student. (See also, Section One on Student Evaluation Procedures and Providing an Individual Educational Plan.)

STUDENT EVALUATION

The main considerations in student evaluation are to determine present level of functioning and to determine the rate of achievement of goals and short-term objectives. The following is a suggested procedure for student evaluation:

1. Initial assessments leading to the development of annual goals and short-term objectives should include use of diagnostic academic tests, county-developed competency tests, standardized test measures, and assessment in vision curriculum areas (listening, Braille, typing, low vision,

orientation and mobility, etc.). See Appendix C for assessments developed or adapted for the visually impaired.

2. Periodic reviews in the form of written reports or conferences with parents and regular class teachers should be utilized to analyze progress toward annual goals and determine possible changes or amendments in annual goal statements.

3. An annual IEP review shall be conducted for each student during which data will be presented (by ESE teacher and other staff involved in the student's instructional program) indicating the student's progress/mastery of annual goals. Instruments used to assess student growth during the annual evaluation process should be consistent with and complement instruments used during initial assessment.

4. Periodically each student should be administered a teacher-made inventory and/or standardized assessment instrument covering objectives taught during the period. Short-term objectives should reflect annual goals determined by the staffing committee. Reports to parents or regular class personnel can be based on the finding of these measures.

5. Data should be kept on each student which will indicate date of mastery and mastery level of each objective prescribed. These data should be recorded on the student's IEP and can be collected from many sources.

6. Checklists or observational formats are appropriate for assessing functional vision, developmental levels, social skills, Braille reading skills, equipment use (Optacon, Speech+, Talking Book, etc.), and orientation and mobility skills.

7. The Florida Student Achievement Testing program consists of assessments administered each spring in grades 4, 7, and 10 in reading, writing, and mathematics. In addition, all eleventh graders are required to take the High School Competency Test.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students with visual impairments are eligible to receive a standard diploma if they meet the same credit and competency requirements as specified by the district for regular students. The district requirement must include, but is not limited to, the state minimum graduation requirements summarized below.

1. Number of Credits: 24 Credits

2. Passing the High School Competency Test (HSCT)

3. Credits and Subject Areas

    a. English - 4 Credits

       English courses must include major concentration in Composition and Literature

    b. Mathematics - 3 Credits

c. Science - 3 Credits

Two of the science credits must include a laboratory component. (NOTE: School districts may request a waiver of the laboratory component by the State Board of Education in accordance with Section 232.246(1)(b)3, Florida Statutes.)

d. American History - 1 Credit

e. World History - 1 Credit

This course shall include a comparative study of the history, doctrines, and objectives of all major political systems in fulfillment of the requirements of Section 233.064, Florida Statutes (not less than thirty hours of instruction in Americanism vs. Communism.)

f. Economics - 0.5 Credit

This course shall include a comparative study of the history, doctrines, and objectives of all major economic systems.

g. American Government - 0.5 Credit

h. Practical Arts, Vocational Education, or Exploratory Vocational Education - 0.5 Credit

Any secondary course in the Vocational Section of the Course Code Directory may satisfy this requirement.

i. Performing Fine Arts - 0.5 Credit

j. Life Management Skills - 0.5 Credit

This course shall include nutrition, drug education, consumer education, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, hazards of smoking, positive emotional development, and information and instruction on breast cancer detection and breast self-examination.

k. Physical Education - 0.5 Credit

This course will include assessment, improvement, and maintenance of personal fitness.

l. Electives - 9 Credits

Any course listed in the Course Code Directory as appropriate for grade 9 or above may fulfill an elective credit for graduation except Study Hall and other courses identified as non-credit (NC), Adult Basic Education, and GED Preparation.

4. Grade Point Average

A grade point average of 1.5 on a 4.0 scale is needed for the *24 credits used to meet state graduation requirements.*

Students with visual impairments are eligible to receive a standard diploma if they meet all requirements as noted above. A certificate of completion would be given if the student meets all district requirements but fails to meet state requirements.

A student is considered to have graduated when awarded a standard diploma. A certificate of completion is not considered high school graduation.

Note: The special diploma or special certificate of completion are not options for graduation for a student with a visual impairment unless the student is multi-handicapped and can achieve the special standards for one of the following programs: educable mentally handicapped, trainable mentally handicapped, hearing impaired, specific learning disabled, physically impaired with a serious impairment in oral or written communication, or emotionally handicapped.

VI. PROGRAM EVALUATION

Program evaluation encompasses the procedures and principles which are used to obtain information for decision making relative to the total program provided to students with visual impairment. Decisions may require a determination of the current status of a particular aspect of a program and then a specification of desired modifications. Information must be gathered and analyzed in a systematic manner to ensure that the decisions are based on both valid and reliable data. Each district must develop a plan for the use of evaluative data for improvement of special programs.

Numerous models and approaches are available for conducting program evaluations. Four are described in Project EESE (Guide to Evaluating Exceptional Student Education Programs), a series of publications which can be used in the training of personnel for implementation of program evaluation. These publications are available at FDLRS Associate Centers and at the Clearinghouse/Information Center in Tallahassee.

More specific program evaluation information can be gathered through use of an evaluation model designed especially for use with programs for students with visual impairments. Such models include the following:

Scholl, G.T. (1980). Self study and evaluation guide for day school programs for visually handicapped pupils: A guide for program improvement. Council for Exceptional Children: Reston, VA.

Hazekamp, J., & Huebner, K.M. (Eds.). (1989). Program planning and evaluation for blind and student with a visual impairments. American Foundation for the Blind: New York.

SECTION THREE: PROVISIONS FOR PERSONNEL AND FACILITIES

I. Certification Requirements
II. Teacher Responsibilities
III. Inservice Education
IV. Facility Guidelines
V. Specialized Equipment and Materials

SECTION THREE: PERSONNEL AND FACILITY PROVISIONS

I. CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Rule 6A-4.017, FAC: *Specialization Requirements for Certification in Separate Areas of Exceptional Student Education (Grades K-12) Academic Class Until July 1, 1992.*

(4) Specialization requirements for visually impaired (grades K-12).

(a) A bachelors or higher degree with a major in exceptional child education with specialization in visual disabilities, or

(b) A bachelors or higher degree with certification in another subject or field and eighteen (18) semester hours in exceptional child education including credit in each area specified below:

1. *A survey course in the education of exceptional children.*
2. *Anatomy, physiology and hygiene of visual mechanism, including educational implications.*
3. *The nature and needs of children with visual disabilities.*
4. *Educational management of children with visual disabilities (partial vision and blindness) including school setting, methods, and materials.*
5. *Braille.*

Rule 6A-4.0178, FAC: *Specialization Requirements for Certification in the Area of Visually Impaired (Grades K-12) Academic Class Beginning July 1, 1992.*

(1) Plan One. A bachelor's or higher degree with an undergraduate or graduate major in visually impaired, or

(2) Plan Two. A bachelor's or higher degree with thirty (30) semester hours in exceptional student education to include the areas specified below:

(a) Three (3) semester hours in foundations of exceptional student education to include historical perspectives, student characteristics, and trends and issues;

(b) Three (3) semester hours in educational management of exceptional students to include classroom organization, behavior management, and consultation skills;

(c) Three (3) semester hours in methods and materials for teaching reading to include:

1. *Sequential developmental skills and concepts of reading,*
2. *Recognition and diagnosis of reading problems, and*

3. *Prescription and utilization of appropriate methods and materials to increase reading performance; and*

(d) *Twelve (12) semester hours in specialized courses for the education of students who are visually impaired to include three (3) semester hours in each of the following:*

1. *Introduction to visual impairments including psychological, social, and emotional implications; history of eductional services; and current delivery models;*

2. *Introduction to orientation and mobility to include theories, concepts, and the impact of mobility on the individual, the family, and the community;*

3. *The teaching of reading and writing of English Braille;*

4. *Functions of the eye and educational implications to include interpretation of medical eye reports, structure of the eye, disease and impairments, low vision training, and the use and care of optical aids; and*

(e) *Nine (9) semester hours in instructional strategies for teaching students who are visually impaired to include three (3) semester hours in each of the following:*

1. *Teaching and assessing personal and social skills to include personal hygiene, self care, interpersonal relationships, career awareness, and social interaction with peers;*

2. *Teaching and assessing communication skills and reading including the use of specialized equipment; and*

3. *Teaching and assessing mathematics, science, and technology to include Nemeth code, abacus, specialized science materials, adapted technology, and computer access devices.*

Rule 6A-4.01794, FAC: *Specialization Requirements for the Orientation and Mobility Endorsement-Academic Class.*

(1) *Plan One. A bachelor's or higher degree with certification in visually impaired and nine (9) semester hours to include three (3) semester hours in each of the following:*

(a) *Beginning orientation and mobility skills to include experience and observation of behaviors under conditions simulating visual impairments;*

(b) *Advanced orientation and mobility skills focusing on increasingly complex environments and applications to multihandicapped preschool, school-age, and adult populations; and*

(c) *Applied skills in orientation and mobility to include observation and assessment, and planning and delivery of orientation and mobility services to students with visual impairments; or*

(2) *Plan Two. A bachelor's or higher degree with certification in an academic class subject and twenty-four (24) semester hours to include the areas specified below:*

(a) *Three (3) semester hours in each of the following:*

1. *Foundations of exceptional student education include historical perspectives, student characteristics, and trends and issues;*
2. *Introduction to visual impairments including psychological, social, and emotional implications; history of educational services; and current delivery models;*
3. *Functions of the eye and eductional implications to include interpretation of medical eye reports, structure of the eye, disease and impairments, low vision training, and the use and care of optical aids;*
4. *Introduction to orientation and mobility to include theories, concepts, and the impact of mobility on the individual, the family, and the community;*
5. *Beginning orientation and mobility skills to include experience and observation of behaviors under conditions simulating visual impairments;*
6. *Advanced orientation and mobility skills focusing on increasingly complex environments and applications to multihandicapped preschool, school-age, and adult populations; and*

(b) *Six (6) semester hours in applied skills in orientation and mobility to include observation and assessment, and planning and delivery of orientation and mobility services to students with visual impairments.*

II. TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Responsibilities of the teacher of visually impaired will vary with district philosophy and size. In general, teachers may be responsible for many of the following:

- Have a good understanding of the educational philosophy and curriculum of the school district and keep abreast of new developments in general education and of the implication of such developments for students with visual impairments.

- Have a complete understanding of the philosophy of services for visually handicapped students in the school district in relation to local, state, and federal regulations.

- Assist in determining eligibility and appropriate placement. This may include a functional vision assessment.

- Orient school personnel regarding interpretation of visual impairments, the special needs and learning characteristics of students with visual impairments, the function and supportive help available for students with visual impairments, and information and interpretation of local, state, and national resources in the education of students with visual impairments.

- Share the responsibility for ongoing needs assessment, program planning, and scheduling with parents, the child when appropriate, classroom teacher, principal, guidance counselor, and other appropriate school personnel.

- Advise the classroom teacher about environmental adjustments for the student with a visual impairment in the school situation.

- Share with school personnel practices and procedures which make learning tasks easier for the student with a visual impairment and behavior management skills to facilitate both programming efforts and reduction of inappropriate behaviors.

- Secure texts, supplementary materials, districtwide tests, educational aids, and equipment needed by the student with a visual impairment.

- Prepare or arrange for special materials needed for the child's maximum participation in regular class activities.

- Consult with the classroom teacher regularly to share teaching strategies and to determine when the student with a visual impairment needs additional assistance.

- Teach unique skills needed by students with visual impairments.

- Assist with adaptation and administration of classroom and standardized tests, assuring extra time as needed.

- Maintain records and exchange information about the student with a visual impairment with appropriate personnel consistent with school district policies regarding confidentiality.

- Prepare a master schedule to be given to the supervisor and principal of each building in which students are served.

- Work within the framework and policies of the school.

- Coordinate contact with support groups and individuals such as transcribers or readers for students with visual impairments, counselors, and mobility instructors.

- Attend professional meetings (in and out of the district) in order to keep abreast of new developments in the education of students with visual impairments.
- Maintain ongoing contact with parents to assure realistic understanding of the child's abilities, progress, future goals, community resources, etc.

Specific teacher competencies are referenced in Scholl (1986) or Spungin (1977).

B. The orientation and mobility specialist's primary responsibility is to instruct students with visual impairments so that they may travel safely and independently in familiar and unfamiliar environments. Orientation and mobility specialists may be responsible for many of the following:

- Instruct student with a visual impairments in the development of skills and knowledge that enable them to travel independently to the highest degree possible, based on assessed needs and the students' IEPs.
- Teach students to travel with proficiency, safety, and confidence in familiar and unfamiliar environments.
- Provide consultation and support services to parents, regular and special education teachers, other school personnel, and sighted peers.
- Confer regularly with parents, classroom teachers, physical education teachers, and/or other special education personnel to assist in home and classroom environmental modifications, adaptations, and considerations and to ensure reinforcement of appropriate orientation and mobility skills that will encourage the student with a visual impairment to travel independently in these settings.
- Work with the teacher of the visually impaired to conduct the functional vision assessment as it relates to independent travel.
- Prepare sequential and meaningful instruction geared to the student's assessed needs, IEP goals and objectives, functioning level, and motivational level.
- Prepare and use equipment and materials for the development of orientation and mobility skills, e.g., tactual maps, models, distance low vision aids, and long canes.
- Transport students to various community locations as necessary to provide meaningful instruction in realistic learning environments.
- Evaluate students' progress on an ongoing basis.
- Keep progress notes on each student.
- Participate in necessary parents' conferences and meetings.

- Provide inservice training to regular and special education personnel, sighted peers, and parents concerning the orientation and mobility needs of the student with a visual impairment and appropriate methods and procedures for interacting with the person with visual impairments that will foster maximum independence and safety (Hazekamp, J. & Huebner, K., 1989).

Specific competencies for orientation and mobility instructors are referenced in Uslan, Hill, & Peck (1989).

C. The classroom teacher with a student with a visual impairment in the class will necessarily share certain responsibilities with the teacher of the visually impaired. These may include the following:

- Share responsibility for program planning and scheduling with the teacher of the visually impaired, other appropriate school personnel, parents, and the student himself.
- Confer with the teacher of the visually impaired in order to identify areas in which the student needs help and to determine mutually convenient times during the school day for the teacher of the visually impaired to work with the student.
- Share the responsibility for designing and implementing the student's instructional plan with the teacher of the visually impaired.
- Maintain records and exchange information about the child with the teacher of the visually impaired on a regular basis.
- Provide lesson assignments, tests, and other materials which need to be reproduced in another medium to the teacher of the visually impaired as much in advance as possible.

III. INSERVICE EDUCATION

Inservice education is a very important aspect of total program planning for the visually impaired, but it is sometimes difficult to provide to this low-incidence area. It is crucial that school personnel be provided sufficient opportunity to understand the purpose and function of all aspects of special programming for students with visual impairments. Inservice education may be provided on a variety of topics, in a variety of ways and by different services.

- Classroom visitations provide teachers with the opportunity to observe techniques being used in teaching skill areas, management of behavior, and classroom organization. Such visitations can occur within districts or can be offered cooperatively between districts.
- Teacher meetings which provide opportunities for teachers to get together to discuss common problems and possible solutions are valuable professional experiences. The New Teacher Orientation Meeting and Regional Meetings sponsored by Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Handicapped (FIMC/VH) and Bureau of Education for

Exceptional Students (BEES) as well as multi-district inservice activities provide such opportunities.

- Use of visiting professors, extension courses, and consultants is usually a more expensive approach to inservice; however, it is probably one of the better ways to assist teachers in staying current in the field in which they work. School personnel have frequently been able to negotiate with nearby colleges or universities in designing extension courses based upon the needs of the teachers. In addition, the Program Specialists at BEES and the Coordinators at FIMC/VH are available as consultants to all districts at no cost.
- Special workshops or institutes which are designed for teachers from the local district or which include teachers from neighboring school districts have been highly effective means of dealing with curricular or management issues. Videotapes can be utilized effectively to demonstrate specific instructional sequences or management techniques. Weekends With the Experts for Visually Impaired is a seminar approach sponsored by the Department of Education and Florida State University which intensively addresses specific inservice needs. The Florida Conference of Educators Serving the Visually Impaired sponsored annually by FIMC/VH is also designed to meet specific inservice needs.
- Professional conferences and conventions are held annually and in a variety of locations nationally and statewide. It is highly desirable that administrators design plans that allow teachers to attend. Such opportunities are perhaps the best morale boosters available.

IV. FACILITY GUIDELINES

Basic facility requirements include the following:

A special class or resource room should be adequately furnished and conveniently located. Special attention should be given to assure that an adequate number of electrical outlets are available, lighting is appropriate, and extra storage for Braille and large-print materials is provided. For details as to facility designs and capacity criteria, refer to Rule 6A-2.032, FAC.

An itinerant program should have adequate space on a base facility for storage and teacher planning activities. An instructional area in each facility served should be provided in accordance with design and capacity criteria in Rule 6A-2.032, FAC. Special attention should be given to lighting, acoustics, convenience, and climate control in the space selected for the itinerant personnel.

V. SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

Specialized classroom equipment and materials, which will vary with the needs of the students, may include

- typewriters
- bookstands
- lamps with rheostats
- closed circuit television systems
- optical aids
- braille writers
- canes
- computers and other assistive technology accessible to students with visual impairments

In addition to the above, the teacher should have access to a copy machine which has the capacity to enlarge teacher-made worksheets, tests, etc.

(See Appendix G: FLORIDA INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS CENTER FOR THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED.)

APPENDIX A

VISION SCREENING TRAINING AND PROCEDURES

APPENDIX A

VISION SCREENING TRAINING AND PROCEDURES

A. Training

According to guidelines published by the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness it is advisable to provide at least two, two-hour sessions that train personnel to administer vision screenings. Time must also be allowed for volunteers to practice screening with children. Suggested subject matter for training sessions includes the following:

- philosophy of vision screening
- interpretation of limitations and potentialities of the process
- growth and development of visual skills in children
- anatomical structure of the eye and how we see
- symptoms of eye trouble in children
- common vision problems in children
- demonstration and practice of vision screening techniques
- supervised practice on children (in nursery school or school setting)
- how to gain cooperation of children being tested
- procedure for handling referrals and follow-up.

B. Referral for Professional Eye Exam

Children who fail the initial screening should be rescreened before a referral is made for a professional eye exam. Referral is based on the results of rescreening on the Snellen test for distance vision.

- 3 year olds with screened vision in either eye of 20/50 or poorer would be referred for a professional eye examination. This acuity level indicates the inability to identify correctly one more than half the symbols on the 40-foot line on the chart at a distance of 20 feet. A two-line difference in visual acuity between the eyes in the passing range, i.e., 20/20 in one eye and 20/40 in the other also indicates a referral recommendation.

- All other ages/grades with screened vision in either eye of 20/40 or poorer should be referred for a professional eye examination. This acuity level means the inability to identify correctly one more than half the symbols on the 30-foot line at a distance of 20 feet. A visual acuity of 20/20 for children of all ages is considered excellent. However, visual acuity of 20/40 is a practical referral level.

Note: If screening is done at a distance other than 20 feet with the appropriate chart, an equivalent measurement should be used. For example, in screening with the 10-foot chart, the equivalent measurement for a referral level of 20/50 is 10/25 and for 20/40 is 10/20.

C. Difficult to Screen Students

Students with communication difficulties or cognitive problems can be difficult to screen using routine procedures and equipment. For these students, persons trained in functional vision observations can provide screening information.

Infants and preschoolers can be difficult to screen using routine procedures and equipment. However, observation and interaction with the child can provide useful information. Factors to consider in an infant or preschool screening are:

- alertness to environmental stimuli
- ability to fixate or follow with either eye
- objection to having one eye covered
- presence of nystagmus
- presence of any other signs of possible eye problems.

D. Factors to Consider

- What are the signs of possible eye problems?

  All children observed to have any of the complaints or behaviors listed below, regardless of screening results, should be referred for a medical evaluation.

  --Thrusting head forward
  --Tilting head
  --Eyes watering
  --Frowning, scowling, or squinting
  --Puckering the face
  --Closing one eye during test of both eyes together
  --Excessive blinking
  --Crossed eyes
  --Crusts on lids among lashes
  --Red eyelids
  --Recurring styles or swollen lids
  --Complaints of itchy, burning, or scratchy eyes

- Is a referral for a medical evaluation necessary for children wearing glasses?

  The need for referral of children who fail the visual acuity test with their present correction should be based on date of last examination; observation by parent, teacher, and screener; and schedule of re-examinations recommended by the eye care specialist.

E. Evaluation of Your Screening Program

Evaluation is an essential part of a well rounded vision screening program and should be conducted on an ongoing process. It allows changes and improvements to be made.

The types of questions that need to be answered in an evaluation are as follows:

- What percentage of the "target population" was screened?
- Of those screened, what percentage was referred for an eye examination?

- Of those referred, what percentage received a professional eye examination?
- Of those examined, what percentage was found to have a visual problem?
- What types of visual problems were identified?

Answers to these questions will provide clues for program improvements. For example, the percentage referred for care and the percentage found to have a visual problem may provide information about the screening process, i.e., whether the project is over-referring or under-referring.

If almost all, say 98%, of the children referred for professional examination are found to have a visual problem, one would be concerned about under-referral. On the other hand, if only 50% of those referred are found to have a visual abnormality, one would be concerned with over-referral.

To go one step further, the tabulation of the type of abnormality found will define the most prevalent eye problems and indicate areas where activities aimed at prevention would be appropriate.

Two statistics, the percentage referred for care and the percentage that received care, can provide information on the success of follow-up. The cost effectiveness and efficiency of vision screening programs depends on the most complete follow-up. In summary, a comprehensive evaluation based on good recordkeeping is vital to the continued success of any vision screening program.

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE EYE REPORT FORMS

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APPENDIX B
EYE REPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH VISUAL PROBLEMS

NAME OF PUPIL (Type or print) _____ (First) _____ (Middle) _____ (Last) _____ SEX _____ RACE _____

ADDRESS (No. and street) _____ (City or town) _____ (County) _____ (State) _____ DATE OF BIRTH (Month) _____ (Day) _____ (Year) _____

GRADE _____ SCHOOL _____ ADDRESS _____

I. HISTORY

A. Probable age at onset of vision impairment. Right eye (O.D.) _____ Left eye (O.S.) _____

B. Severe ocular infections, injuries, operations, if any, with age at time of occurrence _____

C. Has pupil's ocular condition occurred in any blood relative(s)? _____ If so, what relationship(s)? _____

II. MEASUREMENTS (See back of form for preferred notation for recording visual acuity and table of approximate equivalents.)

A. VISUAL ACUITY

	DISTANT VISION			NEAR VISION			PRESCRIPTION		
	Without correction	With best correction*	With low vision aid	Without correction	With best correction*	With low vision aid	Sph.	Cyl.	Axis
Right eye (O.D.)									
Left eye (O.S.)									
Both eyes (O.U.)							Date		

B. If glasses are to be worn, were safety lenses prescribed in: Plastic _____ Tempered glass _____ *with ordinary lenses

C. If low vision aid is prescribed, specify type and recommendations for use. _____

D. FIELD OF VISION: Is there a limitation? _____ If so, record results of test on chart on back of form.

What is the widest diameter (in degrees) of remaining visual field? O.D. _____ O.S. _____

E. Is there impaired color perception? _____ If so, for what color(s)? _____

III. CAUSE OF BLINDNESS OR VISION IMPAIRMENT

A. Present ocular condition(s) responsible for vision impairment. (If more than one, specify all but underline the one which probably first caused severe vision impairment.) O.D. _____ O.S. _____

B. Preceding ocular condition, if any, which led to present condition, or the underlined condition, specified in A. O.D. _____ O.S. _____

C. Etiology (underlying cause) of ocular condition primarily responsible for vision impairment. (e.g., specific disease, injury, poisoning, heredity or other prenatal influence.) O.D. _____ O.S. _____

D. If etiology is injury or poisoning, indicate circumstances and kind of object or poison involved. _____

IV. PROGNOSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Is pupil's vision impairment considered to be: Stable _____ Deteriorating _____ Capable of improvement _____ Uncertain _____

B. What treatment is recommended, if any? _____

C. When is reexamination recommended? _____

D. Glasses: Not needed _____ To be worn constantly _____ For close work only _____ Other (specify) _____

E. Lighting requirements: Average _____ Better than average _____ Less than average _____

F. Use of eyes: Unlimited _____ Limited, as follows: _____

G. Physical activity: Unrestricted _____ Restricted, as follows: _____

TO BE FORWARDED BY EXAMINER TO:

Date of examination _____

Signature of examiner _____ Degree _____

Address _____

If clinic case: Number _____ Name of clinic _____

PREFERRED VISUAL ACUITY NOTATIONS

DISTANT VISION. Use Snellen notation with test distance of 20 feet. (Examples: 20/100, 20/60). For acuities less than 20/200 record distance at which 200 foot letter can be recognized as numerator of fraction and 200 as denominator. (Examples: 10/200, 3/200). If the 200 foot letter is not recognized at 1 foot record abbreviation for best distant vision as follows:

HM	HAND MOVEMENTS
PLL	PERCEIVES AND LOCALIZES LIGHT IN ONE OR MORE QUADRANTS
LP	PERCEIVES BUT DOES NOT LOCALIZE LIGHT
No LP	NO LIGHT PERCEPTION

NEAR VISION. Use standard A.M.A. notation and specify best distance at which pupil can read. (Example: 14/70 at 5 in.)

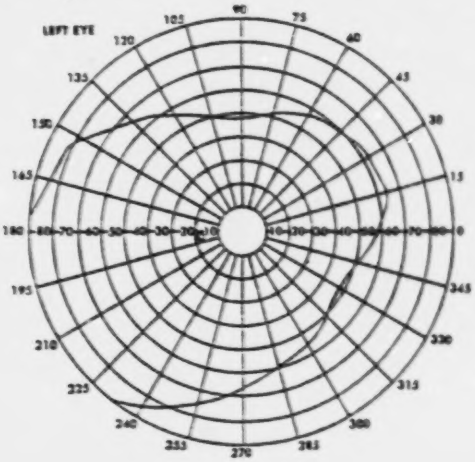
TABLE OF APPROXIMATE EQUIVALENT VISUAL ACUITY NOTATIONS

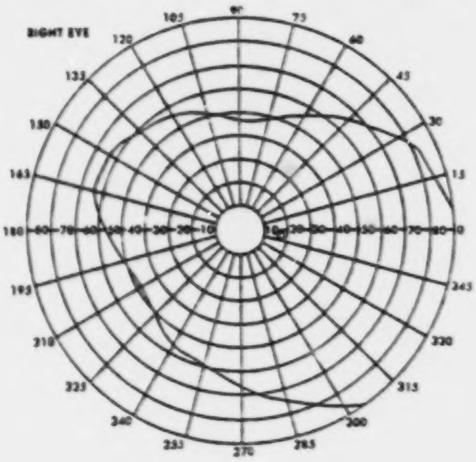
These notations serve only as an indication of the approximate relationship between recordings of distant and near vision and point type sizes. The teacher will find in practice that the pupil's reading performance may vary considerably from the equivalents shown.

Distant Snellen	*Near*			*% Central Visual Efficiency for Near*	*Point*	*Usual Type Text Size*
	A.M.A.	*Jaeger*	*Metric*			
20/20 (ft.)	14/14 (in.)	1	0.37 (M.)	100	3	Mail order catalogue
20/30	14/21	2	0.50	95	5	Want ads
20/40	14/28	4	0.75	90	6	Telephone directory
20/50	14/35	6	0.87	50	8	Newspaper text
20/60	14/42	8	1.00	40	9	Adult text books
20/80	14/56	10	1.50	20	12	Children's books 9-12 yrs
20/100	14/70	11	1.75	15	14	Children's books 8-9 yrs.
20/120	14/84	12	2.00	10	18	Large type text
20/200	14/140	17	3.50	2	24	
12.5/200	14/224	19	6.00	1.5		
8/200	14/336	20	8.00	1		
5/200	14/560					
3/200	14/900					

FIELD OF VISION. Record results on chart below.

Type of test used: ____________________ Illumination in ft. candles: ____________________





Test object: Color(s) __________ Size(s) __________

Distance(s): __________

Test object: Color(s) __________ Size(s) __________

Distance(s): __________

Sear 4 Rev/869/10M National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, 79 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

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EYE REPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH VISUAL PROBLEMS

NAME OF PUPIL ______________________________ SEX ______ RACE ______
(FIRST) (MIDDLE) (LAST)

ADDRESS ______________________________ DOB ______

GRADE ______ SCHOOL ______________________________

ADDRESS ______________________________

****

I. HISTORY

A. Probable age of onset of vision impairment. Rt eye ______ Lt eye ______

B. Diagnosis & etiology (underlying cause) ______________________________

C. Ocular surgery(s), treatment, etc. ______________________________

D. Has ocular condition occured in any blood relative(s)? ______
If so, what relative? ______________________________

****

II. MEASUREMENTS

A. Visual Acuity

	DISTANT VISION		NEAR VISION		PRESCRIPTION		
	without correction (if indicated)	with best correction	without correction (if indicated)	with best correction	sph	cyl.	axis
RE:							
LE:							

Add: ______________________________

B. If low vision aids prescribed, type, VA, recommended use ______________________________

C. Field of Vision: Is there a limitation? ____ Record results on back or attach a copy of results. What is the widest diameter (in degrees) of remaining visual field? O.D. ______ O.S. ______

D. Is there impaired color perception (If performed) ______ What color? ______

****

III. PROGNOSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Is vision impairment considered to be: Stable ______ Progressive ______
Capable of improvement ______ Uncertain ______

B. What treatment is recommended, if any? ______________________________

C. Glasses: Not needed ___ Constant wear ___ For close work only ___ Other ______ (specify)

D. Were safety glasses prescribed? ______________________________

E. Lighting requirements: Average ___ Better than average ___ Less than average ___

F. Use of eyes: Unlimited ___ Limited, as follows ______________________________

G. Physical activity: Unrestricted ___ Restricted as follows ______________________________

H. Re-examination recommendation: ______________________________

****

To be forwarded by examiner to: ______________________________
Signature of examiner/Date
Address: ______________________________

In clinic case: Number ______ Name of clinic ______________________________

PREFERRED VISUAL ACUITY NOTATIONS

DISTANT VISION. Use Snellen notation with test distance of 20 feet. (Examples: 20/100, 20/60). For acuities less than 20/200 record distance at which 200 foot letter can be recognized as numerator of fraction and 200 as denominator. (Examples: 10/200, 3/200). If the 200 foot letter is not recognized at 1 foot record abbreviation for best distant vision as follows:

HM	HAND MOVEMENTS
PLL	PERCEIVES AND LOCALIZES LIGHT IN ONE OR MORE QUADRANTS
LP	PERCEIVES BUT DOES NOT LOCALIZE LIGHT
No LP	NO LIGHT PERCEPTION

NEAR VISION. Use standard A.M.A. notation and specify best distance at which pupil can read. (Example: 14/70 at 5 in.)

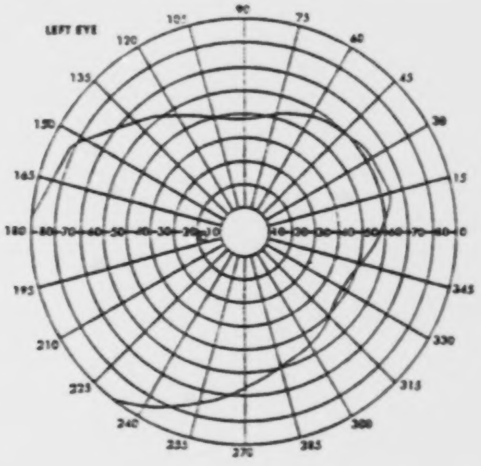
TABLE OF APPROXIMATE EQUIVALENT VISUAL ACUITY NOTATIONS

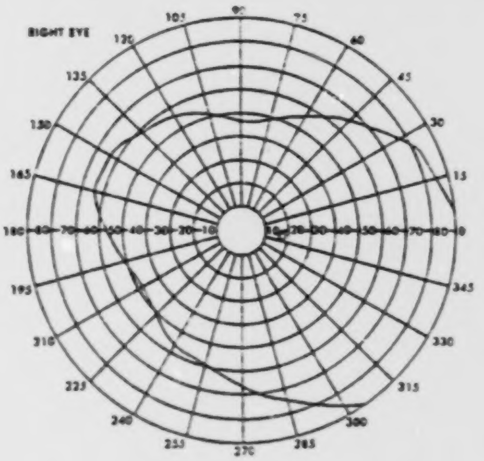
These notations serve only as an indication of the approximate relationship between recordings of distant and near vision and point type sizes. The teacher will find in practice that the pupil's reading performance may vary considerably from the equivalents shown.

	Near					
Distant Snellen	*A.M.A.*	*Jaeger*	*Metric*	*% Central Visual Efficiency for Near*	*Point*	*Usual Type Text Size*
20/20 (ft.)	14/14 (in.)	1	0.37 (M.)	100	3	Mail order catalogue
20/30	14/21	2	0.50	95	5	Want ads
20/40	14/28	4	0.75	90	6	Telephone directory
20/50	14/35	6	0.87	50	8	Newspaper text
20/60	14/42	8	1.00	40	9	Adult text books
20/80	14/56	10	1.50	20	12	Children's books 9-12 yrs
20/100	14/70	11	1.75	15	14	Children's books 8-9 yrs.
20/120	14/84	12	2.00	10	18	Large type text
20/200	14/140	17	3.50	2	24	
12.5/200	14/224	19	6.00	1.5		
8/200	14/336	20	8.00	1		
5/200	14/560					
3/200	14/900					

FIELD OF VISION. Record results on chart below.

Type of test used: ______________________ Illumination in ft. candles: ______________


LEFT EYE
90
75
60
45
30
15
10
345
330
315
300
285
270
255
240
225
210
195
180
165
150
135
120
105
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10


RIGHT EYE
90
75
60
45
30
15
10
345
330
315
300
285
270
255
240
225
210
195
180
165
150
135
120
105
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10

Test object: Color(s) __________ Size(s) __________

Distance(s): __________

Test object: Color(s) __________ Size(s) __________

Distance(s): __________

Stat 4 Rev/869/10M National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, 79 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

APPENDIX C

ASSESSMENTS DEVELOPED OR ADAPTED FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

APPENDIX C

ASSESSMENTS DEVELOPED OR ADAPTED FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED*

I. Developmental or Academic

Assessment	Publisher
Assessing Basic Competencies: Visually Impaired	American Printing House for the Blind
Body Image of Blind Children	American Printing House for the Blind
Callier-Azusa Scale	Callier Center for Communication Disorders
Cooperative Sequential Tests of Educational Progress	**National Association for Visually Handicapped
Developmental Activities Screening Inventory (DASI)	Teaching Resources Corporation
Developmental Assessment of Handicapped Infants and Young Children: With Special Attention to the Visually Impaired	American Foundation for the Blind
Durrell Listening-Reading Series	**American Printing House for the Blind
GUIDE Developmental Skills	Educational Products and Training Foundation
Hill Performance Test of Selected Positional Concepts	Stoelting Company
Key Math Diagnostic Arithmetic Test	**American Printing House for the Blind
Koontz Child Development Program	Western Psychological Services
Oregon Project for Visually Impaired and Blind Preschool Children	Jackson County Education Service District
Piagetian Assessment Battery and Training Manual for Teachers of the Visually Handicapped	Stoelting Company
Reynell-Zinkin Scale	Stoelting Company
Tactile Test of Basic Concepts	American Printing House for the Blind

Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT)	**American Printing House for the Blind

II. Daily Living Skills

Assessment	Publisher
Assessing Basic Competencies: *Visually Impaired*	American Printing House for the Blind
Callier-Azusa Scale	Callier Center for Communication Disorders
GUIDE Developmental Skills	Educational Products and Training Foundation
Koontz Child Development Program	Western Psychological Services
Maxfield-Buchloz Scale of Social Maturity for Use with Preschool Blind Children	American Foundation for the Blind
Oregon Project for Visually Impaired and Blind Preschool Children	Jackson County Education Service District
Overbrook Social Competency Scale	Nevil Interagency Referral Service
Volume V-J: The Florida Catalog of Unique Skills for Exceptional Students	Florida Department of Education

III. Vocational

Assessment	Publisher
Assessing Basic Competencies: Visually Impaired	American Printing House for the Blind
Kuder Preference Record	Science Research Associates **Perkins School for the Blind
Volume V-J: The Florida Catalog of Unique Skills for Exceptional Students	Florida Department of Education

IV. Orientation and Mobility

Assessment	Publisher
Body Image of Blind Children	American Foundation for the Blind
Hill Performance Test of Selected Positional Concepts	Stoelting Company
Peabody Mobility Programs	Stoelting Company
Stanford Multi-Modality Imagery Test	American Foundation for the Blind
Volume V-I: Orientation and Mobility for Student with a visual impairments	Florida Department of Education
Volume V-J: The Florida Catalog of Unique Skills for Exceptional Students	Florida Department of Education
Volume V-K: Movement Analysis and Curriculum for Visually Impaired	Florida Department of Education

* There are many other assessment instruments which can be used successfully to evaluate visually impaired children. Only those that indicated development or adaptation for visually impaired are listed.

** Publisher of adapted version

Note: Additional assessments for determining appropriate mode of reading and assessing functional vision are listed in Appendices D and F.

APPENDIX D

DETERMINATION OF MODE OF READING FOR LEARNERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

APPENDIX D

No. FY 1991-2 January, 1991	DETERMINATION OF MODE OF READING FOR LEARNERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS	Refer Questions To: Carol Allman (904) 488-1106 SC 278-1106

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Rule 6A-6.03014(4)(a)2, FAC, requires that students who will be considered for special programs for visually impaired must be assessed to determine the appropriate mode of reading. The mode of reading is the determined communication medium, generally assessed by teachers of visually impaired students, that a student will use for reading and writing. For many students, the assessment and subsequent recommendation of the communication medium is a straight-forward process; however, for students who have low vision (usually legally blind with some residual vision), this assessment and recommendation can be a complicated process.

The assessment of the mode of reading occurs as part of initial evaluation for eligibility and is usually part of the functional vision observation. The determined mode of reading should be addressed on the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) and reviewed annually as part of the IEP process. Mode of reading must be re-evaluated at least every three years.

I. Definitions Relative to the Concept of Mode of Reading

The following definitions are used throughout this paper:

A. **Primary Mode of Reading**: the most frequently used medium during classroom instruction, the medium used in a wide variety of settings, and the medium used for reading and writing

B. **Secondary Mode of Reading**: the medium that is occasionally appropriate, reduces fatigue, and is learned to allow for ease in completion of some tasks

C. **Regular Print**: material that is available commercially and readily accessible to the general public

D. **Large Print**: material that is enlarged, usually to 18 point or larger

E. **Accommodation**: movement of regular or large print in relation to the field of vision for purposes of reading or writing

F. **Magnification**: use of lens, optical aids, or other technology to enlarge regular or large print

G. **Braille**: a system for tactile reading and writing

H. **Supplements to Reading**: tapes, talking books, Optacon, Kurzweil, computers, and other technology

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II. Procedure for Determining Mode of Reading

There are three major factors to be considered in determining the mode of reading for a student with a visual impairment.

A. **Child characteristics** of age, cognitive level, educational level, eye medical prognosis, visual fields, and visual acuities are initial considerations. These factors are obtained from psychological evaluations, and medical reports.

B. **Mechanical factors** include reading accuracy, rate, and comprehension; fatigue and stamina; physical dexterity; work distance from the page; posture during reading and writing; lighting levels needed for optimal visual functioning; and print factors such as type size, contrast, and clarity. Each of these factors can be assessed through use of the functional vision observation (see Technical Assistance Paper 90-4 on Functional Vision Observation). In addition, these factors should be assessed in any environment frequented by the student (such as the home, school, and work).

C. **Social factors** include the perceived and expressed needs and desires of the student and the family in relation to the portability and availability of the medium or technology and the student's motivation and desire. These factors are assessed through discussions with and observations of the child and the family relative to advantages and disadvantages of different reading mediums and technologies.

Once the above factors are identified, questions (see Section III) can be addressed and the appropriate mode of reading can be discussed and recommended by the IEP committee.

III. Questions to be Considered

Consideration of these questions will lay the groundwork for determining the appropriate mode of reading for a visually impaired child.

A. Child Characteristics

1. **Is the child old enough for instruction in reading?** If the child is not old enough to begin reading, then vision stimulation and tactile discrimination exercises can be used to further observe the abilities of the young or multi-handicapped child. To assist in answering this question, consultation with the parent and child's teacher is recommended.

2. **What are the cognitive and educational levels of the child?** Examination of the cognitive and educational levels will indicate the extent of and adaptations to a reading program in any mode. Consultation with a teacher of mentally handicapped children is recommended if the child is cognitively classified as mentally handicapped or is functioning educationally two years or more below the age appropriate level.

3. **Is the eye medical prognosis of a progressive nature?** Indication of a progressive loss of vision suggests frequent re-evaluating and planning for future reading mediums. Input from parents and other persons who work with the child is imperative, particularly if changes in visual functioning are observed.

4. **Does a visual field restriction exist? If so, how restrictive is it?** Restrictions in the visual field may affect the use of magnifiers or other technology when print is an option for a student with a visual impairment.

5. **What is the visual acuity? Does the acuity fluctuate?** While the visual acuity is not a sole determinant of the mode of reading, it is certainly an indication that will suggest the reading modes to be considered. For instance, braille is a justified consideration for students who are totally blind; however, the amount of usable vision of a legally blind student will fluctuate from one individual to another and even partially sighted students may experience varying degrees of functional vision. For the purposes of this paper it is recommended that braille and accommodating print be considerations for students classified as legally blind.

B. **Mechanical Factors**

1. **Is the student keeping up with his peers in quality and quantity of work requiring reading and writing? If needed, can the student take notes in the chosen medium? What is the number of words read per minute, the reading accuracy rate, and the comprehension rate?** Estimates of these rates can be obtained for students who are already reading and should be established for a variety of mediums (large print, regular print, accommodated print, magnified print). When a student's rates are considerably lower than those of other students or lower than expected by the teacher of the visually impaired, a need for braille remediation or consideration of the use of tape or other auditory media particularly for reading large quantities of material may be necessary. Remember that students need to be able to write as well as read in the chosen medium. As students learn to read, the answers to these questions should be a consideration in addressing the mode of reading during subsequent re-evaluations.

2. **Does the student experience unusual fatigue in reading or writing assignments in the chosen medium? Can the student pursue assignments for an amount of time commensurate with his peers?** If the student's fatigue or stamina is considerably different from those of other students in the class, the primary mode of reading may need to be reconsidered, a secondary mode of reading may need consideration, or a supplement to reading may be necessary, so that the student with a visual impairment can keep up with the workload of the class.

3. **Does the student have the physical dexterity to carry out the mechanical aspects of the reading process (page turning, book holding, head control)?** Young students or students with multiple handicaps may have physical disabilities or immaturity that will make it difficult to evaluate some aspects of the reading process. As reading readiness activities are implemented for these students, the teacher should be recording the achievement of the mechanical factors needed for the reading process for future reference in recommending an appropriate reading mode.

4. **What is the student's working distance from the page (including the posture during reading and writing)?**

This is both a physical and a social consideration. Proper posture in reading helps to alleviate fatigue. In addition, the social ramifications of reading print with their nose in very close proximity to the paper or screen used with a closed circuit TV system or a computer is a consideration for some students.

5. **What type size, contrast, clarity of print, or type style (serif or sanserif) is needed by the student? Is the type size readily available? How do these factors relate to fatigue and reading rates?** Print readers should be assessed on these factors. If considerable difficulties are noted, then a possible change in primary mode of reading may be indicated. In determining the functional acuity of young children, keep in mind that typical print read by this age group is enlarged and, depending on the factors discussed above, difficulties in reading may occur as the print gets smaller, reading demands increase, and accommodative abilities decline.

6. **What lighting levels are needed for optimum visual functioning? Is proper lighting available?** The adjustment of lighting levels should be made in all of the student's environments, particularly if the student is a print reader and it has been determined that lighting is a critical factor to optimal functioning. While lighting is not a factor for determining mode of reading, it is a factor to consider once print has been determined to be the appropriate mode of reading.

C. Social Factors

1. **Will the chosen medium meet the needs of the student in terms of portability and availability (including cost)?** The student, his family, and school personnel will need to address this question and be cognizant of expense of equipment, maintenance considerations, and practical needs for appropriate equipment in the school, home, or work settings.

2. **What are the perceived and the expressed needs and desires of the student and his family?** If a student and his family seem negative toward use of a mode of reading other than regular print, the choice of an appropriate mode of reading may require experimentation, counseling, exposure to others using various modes, and time to adjust to use of a chosen mode of reading and writing.

3. **Is the student motivated to use a chosen mode of reading?** Some students take time to adjust to the idea of using braille, large print, or other accommodations. Whichever mode is chosen, the student must have the desire and motivation to learn proper skills and use of the medium.

The factors discussed above should be helpful in determining the mode of reading and writing for student with a visual impairments. The primary mode of reading may be a combination of braille and large print or modifications to regular print. Any medium that will benefit the student in his academic, social, vocational, and leisure goals should be addressed at some time in the student's educational experience. The IEP will reflect time spent on training students in various mediums as needed. These unique skills (braille, listening skills, use of accommodation, magnification, computers, or other technology) will require special instruction from the teacher of the visually impaired.

IV. Resources

Resources useful in the evaluation of students for the determination of mode of reading include the following:

- Program to Develop Efficiency in Visual Functioning: Diagnostic Assessment Procedure (DAP), American Printing House for the Blind
- Visual Efficiency Scale, American Printing House for the Blind
- Project IVEY: Increasing Visual Efficiency Observation Report, Florida Department of Education
- Functional Vision Report for Visually Handicapped Students Reading Print, American Foundation for the Blind Practice Report
- Low Vision Observation Checklist, American Printing House for the Blind
- Functional Vision: Criterion-Referenced Checklists, American Foundation for the Blind Practice Report
- Technical Assistance Paper, Functional Vision Observations, Florida Department of Education

References for further reading on this topic include the following:

Corn, A., & Ryser G. (1989). Access to print for students with low vision. Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness, 83(7), 340-349.

Daley, B. (1988, May/June). Many visually impaired youths spurn learning braille The Braille Monitor, 237-238.

Koenig, A.J., & Holbrook, M.C. (1989). Determining the reading medium for students with visual impairments: A diagnostic teaching approach. Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness, 83(6) 296-302.

Lucas, T. (1989). Braille: A touchy issue. The Braille Monitor, April/May, 220-222.

Mack, C. (1984). How useful is braille? Reports of blind adults. Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness, 311-313.

Maurer M. (1989). Mandated braille instruction for all legally blind students. DVH Quarterly, 33(3), 3-4.

Myers, T. (1989, December). Readers' viewpoint: In defense of braille. The Braille Monitor, 794-796.

Randall, C. H. (1989, February). Partially sighted, really blind. The Braille Monitor, 109-111.

Spungin, S.J. (1989). Braille literacy. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Schroeder, F. (1988, August). Braille: Pedagogy, prejudice, and the banner of equality. The Braille Monitor, 352-356.

Viadero, D. (1989, December). Parents of blind children lead push to make braille instruction available. Education Week, 5.

Willoughby, D., & Duffy, S. L. (1989). Handbook for itinerant and resource teachers of blind visual impaired student Baltimore: National Federation for the Blind.

Reprint of Technical Assistance Paper: No. 1991-2, dated January, 1991.

APPENDIX E

TESTING MODIFICATIONS FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

APPENDIX E

TESTING MODIFICATIONS FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Modifications in testing of students with visual impairments is often necessary. Given the variation in degree and nature of visual functioning of students, but it is important to keep in mind that modifications do have an effect upon reliability and validity. Most tests have been developed for the sighted and modifications must be made in administration or materials to obtain assessment information on students with visual impairments.

I. Format Modifications

According to State Board of Education Rules, modifications of test instruments and specific procedures for student with a visual impairments shall include the following:

Rule *6A-1.0943(2), FAC.*

(a) Flexible Scheduling. The student may be administered a test during brief sessions so long as all testing is completed by the final allowed test date specified by the Commissioner of Education.

(b) Flexible Setting. The student may be administered a test individually or in a small group setting by a proctor rather than in a classroom or auditorium setting.

(c) Recording of Answers. The student may mark answers in a test booklet, type the answers by machine, or indicate the selected answers to a test proctor. The proctor may then transcribe the student's response onto a machine-scorable answer sheet.

(d) Mechanical Aids. The student may use a magnifying device, a pointer, a non-calibrated rule or template or other similar devices to assist in maintaining visual attention to the test booklet. An abacus and a braille writer may be used. Use of electronic calculators, including talking calculators, is prohibited.

(e) Revised Format. The student may be tested by one or more of the following three (3) methods specifically developed by the Department:

1. *Visual reading. The student may be tested with materials which are enlarged print or may be tested with regular print materials enlarged through mechanical or electronic means. Enlarged materials shall be provided only for students who meet the eligibility criteria for visually impaired programs specified in Rule 6A-6.03014, FAC.*
2. *Tactile reading. The student may be tested with materials which have been transformed to braille code or tested by using devices which permit optical to tactile transformations. Test items which have no application for the non-sighted person will be deleted from the tactile forms authorized or provided by the Department and shall be deleted from the requirements of Rules 6A-1.0941 and 6A-1.0942, FAC.*

3. *Auditory or sign language presentation. The test administrator may sign, provide oral interpretation or read to the student the following portions of the test: all mathematics items, all writing items, all oral reading items, and all directions. The reading items shall be read by the student using visual or tactile means.*

Special attention should be given to ensure that students with visual impairments receive the proper test versions or modifications. Please note that each of the test modifications used should be indicated on the student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP).

The High School Competency Test (HSCT), was designed to measure the student's ability to apply functional communications skills and functional mathematics skills to everyday life situations. It is administered to students classified as high school juniors or seniors. The test may be administered to sophomores in the spring of that school year. This test is made available in regular print, large print, Braille, or recorded formats for use by students with visual impairments. The Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Handicapped assists in the production and dissemination of this assessment and other tests commonly used by districts (See Appendix G.)

II. Time Allocation Modifications

There is no existing rule which specifically provides a recommended amount of time for administering or completing a large print or braille assessment. Rule 6A-1.0943, FAC, "Modifications of the State Student Assessment Test Instruments and Procedures for Exceptional Students" addresses numerous modifications allowed during the administration of the HSCT. Flexible scheduling allows the test to be administered during several sessions but does not provide language pertaining to specific time allocations because the HSCT is not a speed test.

In 1965 when the Stanford Achievement Test was prepared in braille and large print, norms were provided for the braille version. As part of the modification process, time limits (ratios) were suggested as 1.5 to 1 and 2.5 to 1 for large type and braille, respectively, for ease in test administration. However, it was recommended that no time limit be imposed for these tests because the assessments were considered to be ability tests rather than speed tests (Morris, 1974).

The use of evaluative materials which have been designed for sighted individuals to which the visually impaired will be compared creates a dilemma for the educator. It is difficult for some low-vision individuals to perform visual tasks with speed. Although the child with a visual impairment is usually capable of performing the same task, it is likely to require more time (Barraga, 1976).

Torres and Corn (1990) have provided a compilation of "best practice" tips for teachers. It is specifically recommended that "...time and half is usually considered acceptable" (p.22) for completion of assignments and exams.

In 1982, the Florida Department of Education reprinted, with permission, Visually Impaired Students in the Regular Classroom: A Resource Book developed by the Ohio Resource Center for Low Incidence and Severely Handicapped. Section V of this book specifically addresses testing. It is stated that extra time should be provided for the visually impaired and, usually, time-and-a-half is acceptable.

Vander Kolk (1981) notes that visually impaired individuals should be given more time to complete achievement tests. Bradley-Johnson (1986) supports extended time for visually impaired learners and "considerably more time" for students being tested using braille. It is extremely important to interpret extra time carefully, and consider situations where accuracy, not speed, is the important factor.

Determination of an individual's ability can be accomplished through normative data or criterion-referenced measurement. Regardless of the type of test selected, the purpose for its use must be foremost. It must be determined if the information desired is a comparison of one child with another, or an evaluation of the quality of performance on a set of tasks.

APPENDIX F

FUNCTIONAL VISION OBSERVATION

APPENDIX F

No. FY 1990-4 March, 1990	**FUNCTIONAL VISION OBSERVATION**	Refer Questions To: Carol Allman (904) 488-1106 SC 278-1106

Background

Rule 6A-6.03014,(4)(a)3, FAC, requires documentation of functional vision loss as determined through a functional vision observation of students with visual impairments. It is necessary that the functional vision observation be conducted by a teacher of student with a visual impairments or appropriately trained diagnostician in order for a student to be determined eligible for programs for students with visual impairments. A functional vision observation provides valuable information regarding a student's ability to function within a variety of settings. The information is essential for writing an appropriate individual educational plan and may address areas of visual stimulation, reading medium instruction, daily living skill instruction, and orientation and mobility training. In addition, the assessment provides information about recommended adjustments to be made to the student's environment (e.g., lighting, reading distances, and adaptive equipment).

Functional vision is defined as the efficient use of residual vision when operating within the environment. Since functional vision varies for each student depending on medical, motivational, and social factors, Rule 6A-6.03014, FAC, does not delineate specific aspects of functional vision, but clearly mandates that a trained professional (usually a teacher of the visually impaired) must observe and document each student's functional vision.

It is necessary to complete a functional vision observation for all students, including those who lack any usable vision. Students with no functional vision can be assessed for adaptive equipment, test modifications, and travel skill training needs.

A functional vision observation is also required for **re-evaluation** purposes (at least every three years) as outlined in Rule 6A-6.03014(4)(c), FAC. This technical assistance paper is in response to questions regarding the content of a functional vision observation.

Purpose

This technical assistance paper reviews aspects of functional vision observations that are used throughout the state, provides a form that consolidates functional vision information recorded by several districts in Florida (Appendix A), and provides an annotated bibliography of published functional vision assessments (Appendix B).

Format for Recording Functional Vision Observations

Functional vision observations have a wide range of components and vary greatly in detail of skill assessment. The initial functional vision observation should contain enough information for eligibility determination. It should supplement the information on the eye medical examination by delineating specific functional vision needs of the student in an educational setting.

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An initial functional vision observation may not provide the same quantity or quality of information as would be obtained in subsequent functional vision assessments. As teachers become more familiar with a student and assess functional vision during reevaluation of the student, a more detailed accounting of visual functioning may result.

An analysis of formats of functional vision observations indicates that medical information, visual responses, and classroom modification recommendations are generally components of a functional vision observation form in Florida's school programs.

Medical Information

Medical eye examination information includes diagnosis, etiology, field loss, prognosis, and acuities as indicated by an optometrist or ophthalmologist. This medical information and recommendations about use of visual aids as indicated by a low vision evaluation are made by medical personnel and are not observations made by teachers evaluating a student's functional vision. However, many districts find it useful to include this information on the functional vision form as background information. Such information provides a present level medical focus for the person conducting the functional vision observation.

Visual Response

For some students, observation of visual response may consist of a **developmentally sequenced** listing of behaviors including blink reflex, tracking and fixating reactions, papillary response and movement toward light or objects. For other students, it may be more beneficial to record **functional** vision behaviors observed in a classroom setting or surrounding environment.

Observation of these behaviors will provide direction in planning vision stimulation activities, reading medium instruction, daily living skills instruction, and in determining a need for orientation and mobility training. A reading medium recommendation can be made from recording visual responses of the student. Visual response information provides the groundwork for screening of behaviors that may indicate the need for a low vision evaluation.

Classroom Modifications

Recommendations for adaptations to the classroom can be determined by evaluating environmental adjustments (lighting, adaptive equipment, and seating arrangements), observing daily living skills, and addressing course and test modifications needed by the student. Observation of the student's behaviors will provide present levels of functioning in areas to be included on the individual educational plan.

Attached is a general form for functional vision observation recording (Appendix A). It is a consolidation of information generally provided on functional vision forms used throughout Florida. The form is provided for information purposes only and is not intended to replace functional vision observation forms currently in use by districts. Many districts have created forms to suit their own needs and some use a commercial form from sources listed in the annotated bibliography of functional vision evaluations (Appendix B).
Reprint of Technical Assistance Paper: No. 1990-4, dated March, 1990.

Appendix A

FUNCTIONAL VISION OBSERVATION

Date______________

Evaluator__________

Student__________________________________

Date of Birth______________ Grade ____________

School________________ Teacher ____________

Medical Information

Date of Eye Report____________ Eye Doctor _______________________

Diagnosis____

Etiology____

Field Loss______________________________

Prognosis____

Acuities:	Distance corrected/uncorrected	Near corrected/uncorrected
OF(right)	________________	________________
OS(left)	________________	________________

Visual Aids recommended ______________________________________

____

Reevaluation date:__________________________

____

Visual Response

Developmental

yes	no	
		1. Pupil reaction to light
_____	_____	Right eye
_____	_____	Left eye
_____	_____	Both eyes
		2. Blink response
_____	_____	to movement
_____	_____	to light
		3. Light response
_____	_____	fixates on source
_____	_____	blinks
_____	_____	avoids
_____	_____	reaches for source
_____	_____	quiets to light changes
_____	_____	turns toward source

yes	no	
		4. Tracking ability
		vertical
_____	___	with object
_____	___	with light
		horizontal
_____	___	with object
_____	___	with light
		circular
_____	___	with object
_____	___	with light
		5. Object response
_____	___	fixates on
_____	___	reaches for
_____	___	over reaches
_____	___	under reaches
_____	___	avoids
_____	___	manipulates

Description of objects used in testing (size, color):

____

____

____

Functional

yes	no	
_____	_____	1. Discriminates between objects
_____	_____	2. Visually searches for object
_____	_____	3. Identifies primary colors
		4. Identifies pictures
_____	_____	simple black line drawings
_____	_____	from a book
_____	_____	from a ditto
		5. Matches pictures
_____	_____	simple black line drawings
_____	_____	from a book
_____	_____	from a ditto
_____	_____	6. Locates familiar landmarks (Distance __________)
_____	_____	7. Locates unfamiliar landmarks (Distance __________)
_____	_____	8. Adapts easily to sudden changes in illumination
_____	_____	9. Visually avoids stationary obstructions
_____	_____	10. Travels independently indoors
_____	_____	11. Travels independently outdoors

Description of materials and settings used in assessment: ______________________________

____

____

Reading medium: ________ Print ________ Large Print ________ Braille

Reading rate (words per minute) ________ Print ________ Large Print ________ Braille

Print size: ______________________________

Reading behaviors:

Eye preference ________ right ________ left ________ no preference

Reading distance ________________ inches

Fatigue rate: ______________________ minutes or hours

Head position: ______________________________

Posture observations: ______________________________

____

Tracking observations: ______________________________

____

Comments (including student's behavior during testing, room conditions, etc.):

____

____

____

Classroom Modifications

Testing modifications: ______________________________

____

Lighting recommendations: ______________________________

____

Seating arrangements: ______________________________

____

Adaptive equipment: ______________________________

____

Course modifications:____

____

Task-time adjustments:

Reading: ____

____

Writing: ____

____

Mathematics: ____

____

Other: ____

____

General Daily Living Skills Observations:

Cares for self independently

_________Eating

_________Toileting

_________Dressing

_________Organizing personal belongings

Comments: ____

____

Appendix B

FUNCTIONAL VISION EVALUATIONS
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barraga, N. (1980). Program to develop efficiency in visual function. Louisville: American Printing House for the Blind.

Contains an evaluation of the level of visual functioning in low vision persons and provides a training program for efficient vision use. The program is based on normal developmental sequence of vision and can be used with students with a minimum mental age of three. Low Vision Observation Checklists and the Diagnostic Assessment Procedure Record Booklet can be ordered separately from the American Printing House for the Blind.

Bishop, V. E. (1988). Making choices in functional vision evaluations: "Noodles, needles, and haystacks. "Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness, 82 (3), 94-99.

Provides formats for evaluating functional vision of preschool and school age visually handicapped students, including multiply handicapped/visually handicapped children.

Brown, C. J., & Langley, M. B. (1984). Diagnostic/prescriptive model for training inter-disciplinary personnel working with profoundly mentally handicapped learners. Tallahassee: Department of Education, Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students.

Contains a section on functional vision assessment outcomes for profoundly handicapped learners that can be used as a checklist for assessing this population.

Calvello, G. (1987). PAVII Project: Parents and visually impaired infants. San Francisco: Blind Babies Foundation.

Contains a functional vision screening checklist with a sequence of development from birth to 12 months and observation suggestions for assessing infants.

Costello, K. B., Pinkney, P., & Scheffers, W. (1982). Visual functioning assessment tool. Chicago: Stoelting Company.

An informal assessment of visual functioning to be used in an educational setting.

Czerwinski, M. H. (1983). Assessment of visual functioning: An educational guide. Princeton: New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Contains a visual functioning checklist and assessment of the use of low vision aids and special equipment. It provides evaluation procedures for use of vision for near and distance tasks within the classroom. It is most appropriate for school age visually impaired children with no additional handicaps.

Florida Department of Education (1983). Volume V-E: Project IVEY: Increasing visual efficiency.

Provides a functional vision evaluation most appropriate for young or multi-handicapped children and vision stimulation activities appropriate for all ages.

Hazekamp, J., & Huebner, K. M. (1989). Program planning and evaluation for blind and student with a visual impairments. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Outlines what educational programs need to do to serve blind and visually impaired youngsters effectively. It includes a chapter on assessing vision and provides a condensed version of a functional vision checklist summary sheet reprinted from Mangold (1982).

Langley, M. B. (1980). Functional vision inventory for the multiple and severely handicapped. Chicago: Stoelting Company.

Contains valuable information on issues related to visual assessment of students who are severely profoundly handicapped, development of the visual process, a functional vision inventory profile, screening test, activities, and guidelines for evaluating multi-handicapped children. This information is also useful for assessing very young children.

Mangold, S. S. (1982). A teachers' guide to the special educational needs of blind and visually handicapped children. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

A collection of curriculum and teaching techniques for use with visually impaired children. The guide contains a chapter on functional vision with criterion-referenced checklists.

Roessing, L. J. (1982). Functional vision: Criterion-referenced checklists. In S. Mangold (Ed.), A teachers' guide to the special educational needs of blind and visually handicapped children. (pp. 35-44). New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Functional vision assessment is briefly discussed and the author presents a functional vision checklist developed and field-tested in California.

San Francisco State University. (1985). Vision assessment and program manual. Reprinted by Florida Department of Education.

Provides summary forms and a section on functional vision programming most appropriately used with multi-handicapped, deaf-blind, or very young children.

Swallow, R. M., Mangold, S., & Mangold, P. (1978). Informal assessment of developmental skills for visually handicapped students. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Contains the Cumulative Record of Visual Functioning of Children and Youth with Severe Visual Impairments and Functional Vision Report for Visually Handicapped Students Reading Print which are appropriate as functional vision observations.

APPENDIX G

FLORIDA INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS CENTER FOR THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED

APPENDIX G

FLORIDA INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS CENTER FOR THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED

The **Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Handicapped** (FIMC/VH) is a statewide resource center designed to help Florida's public and private schools meet the specialized materials needs of students with visual impairment. Established by the Florida Legislature, the bill creating FIMC/VH became law July 1, 1972, (F.S. 233.056). The Center operates under an agreement between the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students, and the School Board of Hillsborough County.

FIMC/VH serves student with a visual impairments enrolled in Florida's public and private schools, teachers (special and regular) working with student with a visual impairments, and other support staff working with student with a visual impairments.

The Center provides specialized educational materials for student with a visual impairments, such as

- large-print, braille, and recorded editions of textbooks
- abacuses and other math aids
- assessment tests, including the Florida Statewide Assessment Program
- braille writers
- cassette recorders
- braille paper and bold line paper
- consumable worksheets and workbooks
- speech synthesizers
- large print and tactile maps
- other specialized equipment/educational aids.

Information disseminated to teachers includes

- FIMC/VH teacher newsletter, The Visual Field,
- FIMC/VH "Guidelines to Services and Procedures"
- Proceedings from Florida Conference of Educators Serving the Visually Impaired
- Updates relating to technological applications
- Other appropriate information.

There is no charge for any of these services. Materials are purchased by the Center and loaned to schools for a specific period of time.

Any student with a visual impairment is eligible for services from the Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Handicapped. Basic qualifications which **must be met** for each student include

- enrollment in a formally organized public or private, nonprofit educational program of less than college level

- identification as visually impaired as specified in Rule 6A-6.03014(2), FAC: Special Programs for Students Who Are Visually Impaired, Criteria for Eligibility.

Registration for Visually Impaired Student (ESE-243) on file at FIMC/VH

Registration is an ongoing process whereby district administrators and/or teachers of the visually impaired submit completed registration forms on new student with a visual impairments moving into their district during the year.

For information concerning the registration status of students or for information regarding materials ordering procedures, please call or write the Center at the address provided below.

Florida Instructional Materials Center
for the Visually Handicapped
5002 North Lois Avenue
Tampa, Florida 33614
(813) 876-5016
or

In-Florida WATS: 1-800-282-9193

APPENDIX H

DIVISION OF BLIND SERVICES
CLIENT SERVICES AND DISTRICT OFFICES

APPENDIX H

DIVISION OF BLIND SERVICES
CLIENT SERVICES AND DISTRICT OFFICES

Prekindergarten Visually Impaired Children

For prekindergarten visually impaired children, Division of Blind Services (DBS) services include

- developing community resources to promote awareness of services available to children.
- providing information to parents regarding other local, state, and federal agencies available to help meet the educational, medical, and financial needs of their visually impaired child
- providing guidance and counseling to parents regarding visual and other medical impairments as related to their child
- providing individual counseling or instruction in the home to assist parents or caretakers in maximizing opportunities for the child to reach maximum personal growth and development
- organizing group workshops or meetings for parents of visually impaired or multi-handicapped children to provide educational, social, and other opportunities as related to common interests and needs of the group.

K-12 Visually Impaired Children

For students not yet ready for vocational planning, including dual sensory impaired and blind multi-handicapped children, DBS services include

- assisting parents in the location and enrollment of blind children in appropriate educational settings
- maintaining contact with parents and the child throughout the educational process and assisting in serving as liaison with school personnel
- assisting in coordinating referrals to other agencies regarding medical, financial, or other needs that may affect the welfare of the child and family
- developing good public relations with other agencies and organizations to obtain resources to provide special programs and activities, to increase the opportunities for social and personal adjustment of children with visual impairments (summer camps, field trips, educational programs, etc.)
- coordinating prevocational planning with school personnel and DBS vocational rehabilitation counselors
- continuing to encourage parents to advocate for their child through local or statewide parent organizations.

Vocational Rehabilitation for High School Students

For students approximately 16 years old or older if dual sensory impaired or blind/multi-handicapped, DBS services include

- determining individual vocational potential through medical, psychological, social, and work evaluation
- coordinating evaluations with school guidance counselors when possible
- providing guidance and counseling to assist the client in understanding the handicap and in making plans to achieve a suitable employment objective

- arranging physical restoration services, if indicated, to reduce or correct medical limitations as related to the employment objective
- providing vocational training or higher education as needed to reach the vocational goal
- providing personal management instruction in the educational facility, at home, at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind, or the Conklin Center
- assisting the client in obtaining suitable employment and providing necessary follow-up services.

The state office is located at 203 Douglas Building, Tallahassee, Florida
(904) 488-1330; SC 278-1330

The twelve DBS District Offices are listed below.

DISTRICT 01

7200 North 9th Avenue, Suite A-11
Pensacola, Florida 32504
(904) 484-5030; SC 690-5030

Counties served: Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton, Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Washington

DISTRICT 02

2003 Apalachee Parkway, Room 201
Tallahassee, Florida 32399
(904) 488-8400; SC 278-8400

Counties served: Franklin, Gadsden, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor, Wakulla

DISTRICT 03

4057 Carmichael Avenue, Suite 215
Jacksonville, Florida 32207
(904) 359-6352; SC 826-6352

Counties served: Baker, Nassau, Duval

DISTRICT 04

417 S. W. 8th Street
Gainesville, Florida 32601
(904) 336-2075; SC 625-2075

Counties served: Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Levy, Marion, Union

DISTRICT 05

1185 Dunn Avenue
Daytona Beach, Florida 32014
(904) 254-3824; SC 376-1160

Counties served: Brevard, Flagler, Putnam, Volusia, Clay, St. Johns

DISTRICT 06

400 W. Robinson Street, 1st Floor
Orlando, Florida 32801
(407) 423-C305; SC 344-6305

Counties served: Lake, Orange, Osceola, Seminole

DISTRICT 07

P. O. Box 18304
Tampa, Florida 33679
(813) 871-7190; SC 542-7190

Counties served: Citrus, Hardee, Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco, Polk, Sumter

DISTRICT 08

3637 - 4th Street North, Suite 310
St. Petersburg, Florida 33704
(813) 893-2341; SC 594-2341

Counties served: DeSoto, Highlands, Manatee, Pinellas, Sarasota

DISTRICT 09

P. O. Box 7348
Ft. Myers, Florida 33911-7348
(813) 278-7130; SC 729-7130

Counties served: Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee

DISTRICT 10

111 Georgia Avenue
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401
(407) 837-5026; SC 252-5026

Counties served: Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach, St. Lucie

DISTRICT 11

3075 W. Oakland Park Boulevard, Suite 211
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33301
(305) 497-3360; SC 457-3360

County served: Broward

DISTRICT 12

401 N.W. 2nd Avenue, Room S-714
Miami, Florida 33128
(305) 377-5339; SC 452-5339

Counties served: Dade, Monroe

APPENDIX I

FLORIDA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

APPENDIX I

FLORIDA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind offers a comprehensive program for students between the ages of 3 and 21. It is a residential school for the multi-handicapped and sensory impaired children of Florida.

The Department for the Blind provides educational programs to meet the needs of Florida's student with a visual impairments. Students whose parents or guardians are Florida residents may attend the school tuition-free.

A full academic program, vocational evaluation and course-work, acquisition of social and daily living skills through the dormitory curriculum, and a comprehensive athletic program provide a well rounded education. The unique skills needed by blind and visually impaired children are the emphasis of the educational and residential programs. Students receive extensive instruction in orientation and mobility, use of specialized technology, and the braille code, as needed. In addition, students are afforded the opportunity to develop socially through various activities with sighted and visually impaired peers, and through mainstreaming into classes in the St. Johns District Schools. Related services that are provided include low vision evaluations, vocational assessments, and educational evaluations.

The school was established in 1885 and is under the direction of a Board of Trustees appointed by the governor and approved by the Board of Education. It has a staff of teachers certified in their specific subject areas and also in the education of the visually impaired or hearing impaired. The school is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and by the National Accreditation Council for the Blind. Chapter 6D of Rules of the Department of Education contain the State Board of Education rules governing FSDB.

For more information contact one of these agencies.

Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind
207 North San Marco Avenue
St. Augustine, Florida 32084
(904) 823-4500

Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students
Florida Education Center
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400
(904) 488-1106

APPENDIX J

SPECIAL FUNDING PROGRAM FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

APPENDIX J

SPECIAL FUNDING PROGRAM FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

In 1973, the Florida Legislature passed the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) which changed the focus for funding education in the state. To provide equalization of educational opportunity in Florida, the FEFP formula recognizes (1) varying local property tax bases, (2) varying program cost factors, (3) district cost differentials, and (4) differences in per student cost for equivalent educational programs due to sparsity and dispersion of student population.

The key feature of the finance program is to base financial support for education upon the individual student participating in a particular educational program rather than upon the numbers of teachers or classrooms. FEFP funds are generated by multiplying the number of full-time equivalent students (FTEs) in each of the educational programs by cost factors to obtain weighted FTEs. Weighted FTEs are then multiplied by a base student allocation and by a district cost differential to determine the state and local FEFP funds. Program cost factors are determined by the Legislature and represent relative cost differences among the FEFP programs. There are separate program cost factors for part-time and full-time programs for visually impaired.

The school districts of Florida receive approximately 53 percent of their financial support of schools from state sources, 40 percent from local sources (includes Required Local Effort portion of FEFP), and 7 percent from federal sources.

In addition to the basic FEFP, funds are appropriated to meet many specific needs by means of categorical programs and special allocations, including the Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Handicapped (Appendix G) and a special funding program for the visually impaired.

What is the "special funding for visually impaired?"

It is a legislative authorization for support of small programs. The special funding is an adjustment in funding to bring the total funds to the equivalent of 3 FTE.

What does a district need to do to participate?

To be eligible, a district(s) must do the following.

1. Have at least five (5) students with visual impairments.
   a. Survey the student population (check referrals with schools, medical personnel, Division of Blind Services, or Child Find). Incidence is 1 out of every 1,000 students.
   b. Cooperate with a neighboring county. There may be five students within a multidistrict region.
2. Hire a certified teacher of visually impaired. For a list of potential teachers, check with the Teacher Recruitment Center or the Program Specialist for Visually Impaired, Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students.
3. Provide an instructional program.

a. This will probably be an itinerant program in which the teacher travels within cooperating districts to serve the students. Explore other options to decide the best one for the students.

b. Provide travel funds, materials, inservice training, and supplies for the teacher and students.

4. Describe this program for visually impaired in the Special Programs and Procedures documents. Include the cooperative agreement (if applicable).

5. Place the cooperative agreements in the school board minutes for each cooperating district and board, as required in Section 230.23(4), Florida Statutes.

Is there an example?

Here are two examples.

1. Two or more small districts might cooperate to provide a teacher of the visually impaired for five or more students. Up to ten or twelve students might be appropriately served if the travel for the teacher is not extensive. The central district could be named as the employing district, with the teacher hired from that district. The program operates with the understanding that the teacher will provide appropriate services to all cooperating districts. The combined FTE for the districts would be supplemented to generate a maximum of three FTEs.

2. A moderate size district providing an appropriate program, but not able to generate three FTEs in programs for the visually impaired, could have the amount supplemented through this special program. Supplementing a single district program will be a second priority in assignment of FTE funds.

What can money be spent on?

Salaries, travel, materials, supplies, equipment, inservice training, etc., are all legitimate program expenditures.

How does it work?

A district or multidistrict cooperative applies prior to the fall FTE count. After the spring FTE count, an adjustment is made to bring the total FTE for vision FT and vision PT up to a total of 3.0. This district or multidistrict cooperative must serve at least five (5) students with visual impairments and must hire a teacher certified in visual disabilities.

How does this program work for multidistrict programs?

Each district counts FTEs within its district based on the instructional contact time provided by the vision teacher. When the FTE count is completed in February, the count for the employing and cooperating districts will be reviewed. Each cooperating district will send to the employing district an amount of dollars equal to the difference between funds generated at the appropriate basic education program count for a full-time student and the additional funds generated by the vision program. For example, if a vision student generated 20/25 FTEs at the sixth grade level and 5/25

FTEs in the vision program, the cooperating district would maintain the equivalent of one FTE at the base cost factor and send the balance to the employing district. The Department of Education would assign additional funds to the employing district to make a total equivalent to three FTEs. This program would not operate during the summer.

Why was this special funding program created for visually handicapped?

Children with visual impairments are an extremely low prevalence group. Since 1973, districts with small populations have found it increasingly difficult to support the funding of a teacher of visually impaired to serve this low number of students. With this special funding, educational opportunities for students with visual impairments are enhanced by providing the opportunity to receive the services of a teacher trained in the area of visual disabilities.

APPENDIX K

CURRICULUM REFERENCES FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

APPENDIX K

CURRICULUM REFERENCES FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

American Foundation for the Blind. (1974). A step-by-step guide to personal management for blind persons. New York: Author.

Caton, H., Pester, E., & Bradley, E. J. (1980). Patterns: The primary braille reading program. Louisville, KY: American Printing House for the Blind.

Clark, T. C., & Morgan, E. C. (1984). The INSITE model. Logan, UT: SKI*HI Institute.

Ferrell, K. (1985). Reach out and teach. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Florida Department of Education. (1983). Volume V-3: Project IVEY: Increasing visual efficiency. Tallahassee, FL: Author.

Florida Department of Education. (1986). Volume V-K: Movement analysis and curriculum for visually impaired preschoolers. Tallahassee, FL: Author.

Florida Department of Education. (1987). Volume V-I: Orientation and mobility for visually impaired students. Tallahassee, FL: Author.

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Frey, W. D., Lynch, L., Jakwerth, P., Purcell, R. (1991). Addressing unique educational needs of individuals with disabilities. Lansing, MI: Disability Research Systems, Inc.

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Mangold, S. (1977). The Mangold developmental program of tactile perception and braille letter recognition. Castro Valley, CA: Exceptional Teaching Aids.

Mangold, S. (Ed.).(1982). A teacher's guide to the special educational needs of blind and visually handicapped children. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Massachusetts Department of Education (1981). Program assessment guide for public school special education services to visually handicapped students. Boston: Author.

Ohio Resource Center. (1982) Visually impaired student in the regular classroom: A resource book. Columbus, OH: Author.

Scholl, G. (Ed.) (1986). Foundations of education for blind and visually impaired children and youth. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Swallow, R. M., Mangold, S., & Mangold P. (Eds.). (1978). AFB practice report: informal assessment of developmental skills for visually handicapped students. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Uslan, M., Hill, E., & Peck, A. (1989). The Profession of orientation and mobility in the 1980s. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Yeadon, A. (1978). Toward independence: The use of instructional objectives in teaching daily living skills to the blind. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

APPENDIX L

LOW VISION EVALUATIONS

APPENDIX L

No. FY 1990-1 July, 1989	LOW VISION EVALUATIONS	Refer Questions To: Carol Allman (904) 488-1106 SC 278-1106

A low vision evaluation is an examination of visual functioning by an eye medical expert. This examination involves the assessment of a student's visual functioning with a variety of low vision aids designed to improve or enhance existing vision. The eye medical expert subsequently may recommend one or a variety of low vision aids for the student to use. Aids that may be prescribed include glasses, magnifiers, or other devices with lenses or scopes that facilitate the user's visual functioning.

Benefits to Students

For school age children, multiple benefits may result from implementation of recommendations made through a low vision evaluation. Children using prescribed low vision aids may experience increased independence at home and school; decreased eye strain and less fatigue; improved understanding of social cues and body language; increased mobility and understanding of their physical environment; improved grades; more rapid completion of school and homework, allowing for time to develop leisure skills and interests; and improved self-esteem (Sael, 1989).

Definitions

A low vision evaluation is very different from visual screening, a functional vision evaluation, or a medical eye examination. Visual screening is the process by which a rapid assessment is made to identify candidates for formal evaluation (Rule 6A-6.03411,(2),(b), FAC). A functional vision evaluation is the documented observation of a student's visual functioning (Rule 6A-6.03014,(4),(a),3, FAC). A medical eye examination must be done by an ophthalmologist or an optometrist, and describes the etiology, diagnosis, treatment regimen, prognosis, near/distance and corrected/uncorrected acuity measures, and measure of the field of vision (Rule 6A-6.03014,(4),(a),1, FAC). A low vision evaluation, while not required by Florida Statutes or State Board of Education Rules, is recommended for students with visual impairments who may benefit from the use of low vision aids. Parent permission is required for a functional vision evaluation, a medical eye examination, and a low vision evaluation if conducted at the request of the district. A vision screening does not require parent permission.

Referral Considerations

In order for the appropriate low vision aid to be prescribed, a student must be examined by an eye medical expert. Referrals for such an examination may be made by the student's teacher or any person involved with providing services to the student. In determining the need for a low vision evaluation, consider the following:

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE Notes are produced periodically by the Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students to present discussion of current topics in the education for exceptional students. The TA Notes may be used for inservice sessions, technical assistance visits, parent organization meetings or interdisciplinary discussion groups. Topics are identified by state steering committees, district personnel, individuals, or from program compliance monitoring.

Medical considerations

The eye medical evaluation may indicate acuity levels that change from one examination to another. Usually the student's acuity will be in the legal blindness range. However, any student with a visual impairment may benefit from a low vision evaluation, particularly if the parent or teacher notices a visual functioning level that is inconsistent with the results of an eye medical evaluation. Such inconsistency does not mean an erroneous evaluation. It merely points out that the student's visual functioning varies with environmental conditions. Thus a low vision evaluation may be able to pinpoint the ideal visual functioning level of the student and maximize this level through the use of low vision aids.

Environmental considerations

If visual efficiency training is successful, then a student may benefit from a low vision evaluation. Maximizing the student's visual functioning is of utmost importance. A teacher of the visually impaired or an orientation and mobility instructor may recognize the need for a low vision evaluation. If changes in the environment create a change in the visual functioning of a student, then a low vision evaluation may be able to point out aspects of the environment that affect the student's visual functioning, and supplement that functioning by prescribing low vision aids.

Low Vision Evaluation Referral Process

Payment for low vision evaluations and the purchase of prescribed low vision aids can be supplemented through a number of sources. Resources include parents, family insurance, the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (depending on eligibility), Division of Blind Services (DBS), community service organizations, or school districts. Referrals for a low vision evaluation may be made to the district school board office or district DBS office. It is recommended that referrals be coordinated with the local DBS counselor. A listing of low vision evaluation experts (eye medical experts) is available from DBS. Local Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) may assist in obtaining evaluation services which cannot otherwise be obtained.

While district sources, including the FDLRS centers, may assist in providing the low vision evaluation, any low vision aids prescribed may have to be purchased through other means. Often, DBS can assist in obtaining the low vision aids. Each district should establish a procedure for referring students and obtaining low vision evaluations. The number of students needing a low vision evaluation is usually minimal for any district; however, obtaining maximum visual functioning for all students should be a goal for exceptional educators.

Reference

Sael, B. (1989). "The dream: All low vision kids in America reach their potential," AER Report. 9-10.

Reprint of Technical Assistance Notes: No. 1990-1, dated July, 1989.

APPENDIX M

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
RULE 6A-6.03014, FAC
SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

6A-6.03014 Special Programs for Students Who Are Visually Impaired.

(1) Visually impaired. Visual impairments are defined as disorders in the structure and function of the eye that, even with the best correction and treatment, interfere with learning.

(a) The blind student is one who after the best possible ocular correction has no vision or has little potential for using vision and relies on tactual or auditory senses for learning.

(b) The partially sighted student is one who after the best possible adjustments and ocular corrections uses remaining vision for learning.

(2) Criteria for eligibility. A student is eligible for a special program for the visually impaired if the following medical and educational criteria are met:

(a) Medical. There is a documented eye impairment as manifested by at least one of the following:

1. A visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye after best possible correction;

2. A peripheral field so constricted that it affects the student's ability to function in an educational setting;

3. A progressive loss of vision which may affect the student's ability to function in an academic setting or,

4. For children birth to five (5) years of age, bilateral lack of central, steady, or maintained fixation of vision with an estimated visual acuity of 20/70 or less after best possible correction; bilateral central scotoma involving the perimacula area (20/80-20/200); bilateral grade III, IV, or V Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP); or documented eye impairment as stated in paragraph (2)(a) of this rule.

(b) Educational. There is a documented functional vision loss which:

1. Inhibits optimal processing of information through the visual channel; and

2. Requires the use of specialized techniques, textbooks, materials, or equipment.

(3) Procedures for screening.

(a) Vision screening is done solely for the purpose of referring students to an ophthalmologist or optometrist for further evaluation. A medical eye report shall take the place of a vision screening report.

(b) Screening shall be in accordance with Section 402.32, Florida Statutes. In addition students being considered for exceptional student programs, excluding gifted and homebound or hospitalized who may be screened on a referral basis, shall receive vision, hearing, speech, and language screenings prior to being considered for eligibility.

(4) Procedures for student evaluation.

(a) The minimum evaluations necessary for determining eligibility shall include:

1. A medical eye examination describing: etiology, diagnosis, treatment regimen, prognosis, near/distance, corrected/uncorrected acuity measures for left eye, right eye and both eyes, measure of field of vision, and recommendations for lighting levels, physical activity, aids, or use of glasses, as appropriate. For children birth to five (5) years of age, a medical assessment describing visual functioning shall be documented when standard visual acuities and measure of field of vision are unattainable.

2. Documented observation of functional vision to include daily living skills and mode of reading by a teacher of students with visual impairments or an appropriately trained diagnostician, and

3. Evaluation of developmental or academic functioning.

(b) Additional information including vocational and orientation and mobility evaluations may be gathered to assist in determining the appropriate educational program and necessary environmental adjustments for the student.

(c) Reevaluation shall occur at least every three (3) years and shall include evaluations in accordance with paragraph (4)(a) of this rule. The medical aspect of reevaluation for students with bilateral anophthalmia may be waived by a written recommendation of a physician.

(5) Instructional program. Instruction in orientation and mobility shall be included when appropriate.

(6) Supportive services.

(a) The district shall make available the professional services needed to support the program. These shall include registration of all students for services of the Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Handicapped.

(b) Other support services may include, but not be limited to:

1. Provision of specialized textbooks, learning materials and equipment; and

2. Cooperative planning with the Division of Blind Services, including parent involvement activities.

Specific Authority 228.041(18)(19), 229.053(1), 230.23(4)(m), 232.01(1)(e), 233.056 FS. Law Implemented 229.053(1), 229.565(3)(b)(c), 236.081(1)(c)(e) FS. History - New 7-1-77, Amended 7-13-83, Formerly 6A-6.3014, Amended 2-12-91.

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State of Florida
Department of Education
Betty Castor, Commissioner
Tallahassee, Florida
Affirmative action/equal opportunity employer